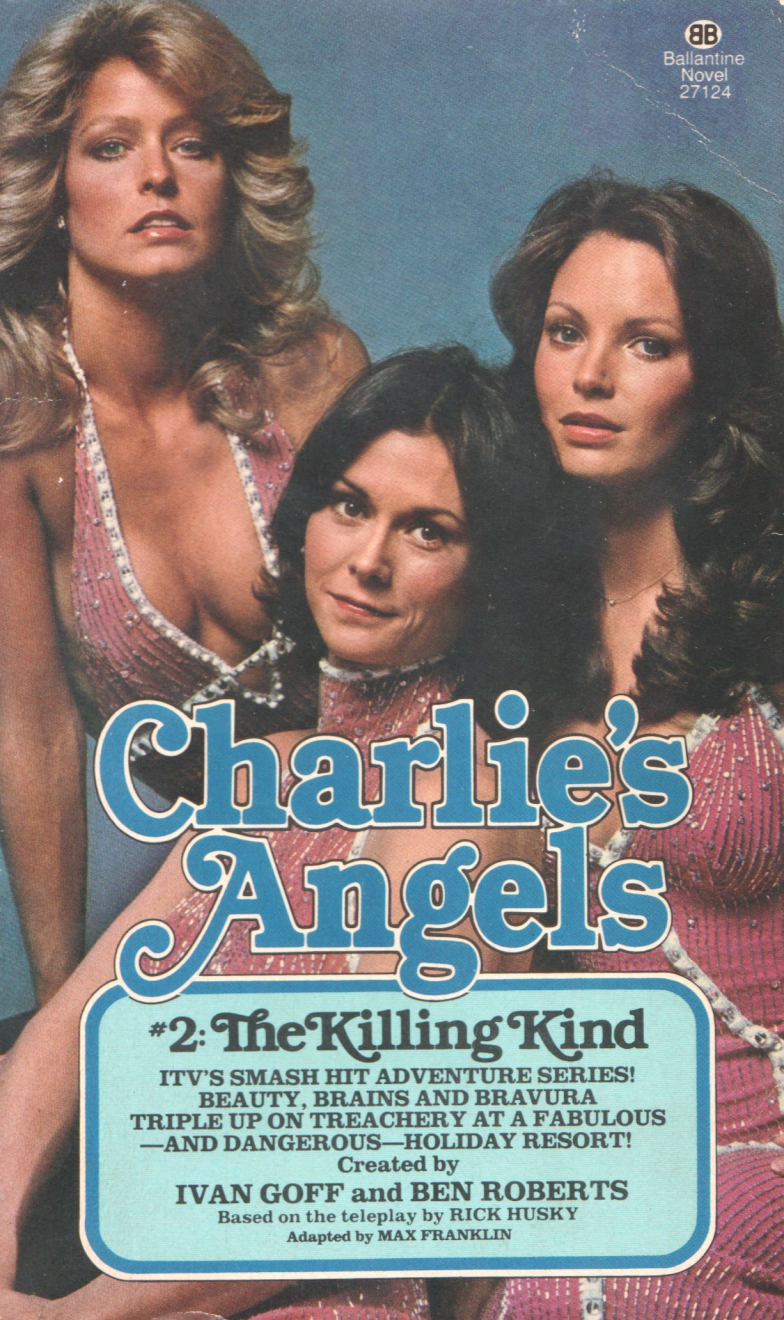
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Based on the teleplay by RICK HUSKY
Adapted by MAX FRANKLIN

An Ordeal by Water . . .

Terranova looked over at the dead man, then back at Jill. "Is he Charlie Townsend?"

The question startled her so much that she gazed at him with her mouth open.

"He isn't," Terranova decided, examining her face. "But your expression gives away that you know Townsend. All three of you girls work for him, don't you?"

"I haven't the faintest idea what you're talking about."

"You tell me who else is working for him and I might cancel your boat ride," Terranova offered.

Jill summoned a scornful smile. "No, you wouldn't. After you pumped me dry, you'd have me killed anyway. But I'll tell you one thing, Charlie has two dozen agents working this case. You haven't got a chance."

Terranova didn't buy it. "You're a lousy liar. How well do you swim inside a sack?"

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The Killing Kind

Created by
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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 76-56165

ISBN 0-345-27124-6

Manufactured in the United States of America

First Edition: April 1977
First Special Printing: April 1977

One

Brooke Anderson rattled the knob of her apartment door three times after pulling it closed from the outside, to make sure the door was latched. She was still upset at having found it not quite latched when she had come home late the night before. She couldn't be sure anyone had been in the apartment, because nothing was missing, and she couldn't pinpoint anything that had been disturbed. But she had an uneasy impression that some items were not quite in the same place they had been, suggesting that if the apartment had been searched, the searcher had gone to some pains not to leave evidence of it.

She was thankful she had left no part of the manuscript and no notes in the apartment.

The building had two stories, with an outside entrance to each apartment. The second-floor units gave onto a balcony with a stairway at each end and a third one in the center. As Brooke's apartment was nearest the center one, she took that down.

She was a slim, pretty girl in her late twenties, with an intelligent face and a somewhat serious manner. She wore a short terry-cloth beach robe over her swimsuit and carried a tote bag containing a large beach towel, suntan lotion, a white swim cap, and assorted items such as cigarettes, a lighter, a miniature portable radio, and her car keys.

A maroon Volkswagen was parked in one of the diagonal slots on the concrete parking area reserved for tenants in front of the building. Brooke climbed into it and drove off.

The apartment house was at the south edge of the

tiny vacation resort village of Seacliffe, on the southern California coast. The town was appropriately named, because it was perched on a sheer cliff about thirty feet above the Pacific Ocean, and only a couple of hundred yards behind it rose another cliff about fifty feet high.

The Pacific Coast Highway ran along the edge of the higher cliff. A green Ford sedan was pulled off on the shoulder just above the apartment house. A large, muscular man with a chin darkened by a five o'clock shadow at eleven in the morning leaned against a front fender. When the girl emerged from her apartment, he lifted the binoculars hanging on a cord around his neck and focused them on her. After watching her drive off to the south, he jumped into his car and drove in the same direction.

The one and only road through the village veed about a hundred yards south of the apartment building, the left fork angling upward to merge into the highway, the right fork continuing on as a frontage road along the edge of the lower cliff. Keeping abreast of the Volkswagen on the road above it, the man in the green Ford saw it continue along the frontage road. Just beyond the intersection he pulled into a service station and used the phone.

At the north edge of the village was the Moonshadows Hotel, the most expensive vacation spot in the area. Hotel manager Paul Terranova was in his office when the phone rang. He was a handsome man in his late forties with a body still youthfully trim and muscular. He wore a smartly cut white leisure suit and an open-necked sport shirt with the collar turned outside the jacket collar.

Picking up the phone, he said, "Hotel director." Manager was too crass a term for Moonshadows.

"Harry West," a gravelly voice said in his ear. "She just left for her private little cove."

"You're sure that was her destination?"

"She was wearing a beach robe and sandals. I couldn't see what she had underneath the robe, but

her legs were bare. And she drove south on the frontage road."

"Okay," Terranova said. "You can come on back."

In one corner of the office, seated in a leather-covered easy chair and reading a racing form, was a large, heavy-shouldered man in his thirties. His moon-shaped face was totally lacking in expression. His breathing was rather forced, and periodically he relieved an asthmatic wheeze by squirting mist up his nostrils from an aerosol mistometer.

Terranova said to the big man, "Bring the Rolls around, Jock. Tell Inga to put her scuba gear in the trunk, and let me know when the two of you are ready to go."

Folding his paper, Jock Koslo rose from his chair and silently left the office. Ten minutes later he stuck his head back in and said briefly, "Okay."

Inga Svensen was waiting in the back seat of the silver gray Rolls-Royce. She was a blonde, statuesque, extremely well-built woman in her late twenties, dressed in a pink jump suit, thong sandals and no stockings. When she had been twenty, at a time when Paul Terranova possessed considerably more influence than he did now, he had arranged for her to be smuggled into the United States from Sweden, where she had faced a murder charge in the death of a lover. She had been blindly loyal to him ever since. Currently she was employed as the hotel's masseuse, but she was always ready to drop that role in order to perform any other task Terranova desired.

Jock Koslo got behind the wheel of the Rolls. Climbing in back with Inga, Terranova said, "Take the frontage road south, Jock."

About a mile beyond the south edge of the village they spotted a maroon Volkswagen parked on the road shoulder. Terranova instructed the driver to park fifty yards behind it.

Terranova and Inga got out and examined the embankment at the edge of the road leading down to a narrow strip of sand beach. Up ahead, where the Volkswagen was parked, there was a railed wooden

stairway leading downward, but here there was not even a path through the thick growth of bushes blanketing the slope.

"Think you can make it down there?" Terranova asked.

The big blonde shrugged. "If I have to. But won't she see me?"

The shoreline was indented here to form a small cove only about a hundred yards across. They couldn't see Brooke Anderson from where they were, which meant she couldn't see them either, but Inga's descent would take her to the north edge of the cove, where she would be clearly visible from the stretch of beach where the Anderson girl was.

"I don't think so," Terranova said. "According to Harry West, she suns herself on a beach towel for about an hour before she goes into the water, so she probably has her eyes closed." He pointed to a floating platform about six feet square anchored some two hundred feet offshore. "When she does go in the water, she always swims out there first, to practice a few dives."

Inga nodded. "You want I should wait out there?"

"Yes. We'll need some kind of signal."

After thinking for a few moments, he took a silver cigarette case from his inside pocket, opened it to disclose the mirrored inside of the lid, then glanced up at the sun, which was high over the ocean in front of them. Adjusting the mirrored surface to reflect the sun's rays, he flashed the reflection into the woman's eyes, making her blink.

"Watch for me at the top of the steps," he said. "If I flash you a signal with this, do it. If I don't signal, it means she was reasonable, and you can come on in."

"All right," she agreed.

Terranova leaned in the front window of the Rolls Royce to get the keys from Koslo, then went around back to open the car trunk. On the floor of the trunk was a rubber wet suit, an air tank with attached breathing hose, diving goggles, and a pair of foot flippers.

There was rarely traffic on the frontage road, which at this point wasn't visible from the highway above. The blonde casually stripped naked in front of Terranova.

There was an almost masculine bigness about her, and her movements also were more masculine than feminine, but nevertheless she was an attractive woman. Her legs were straight and beautifully formed, and her bust was large and firm. Her hands and feet were man-sized, but well shaped, and even features gave her an amazonian handsomeness. Jock Koslo nearly dislocated his neck trying to keep her in focus in his side-view mirror. He had to use his mistometer twice before she had gotten into her wet suit.

She left her clothing in the trunk, strapped on the air tank, and started down the bank barefoot, carrying her flippers and goggles. Slamming the trunk lid, Terranova climbed back into the car, this time next to the driver, gave the keys back to Koslo and told him to drive on and park close behind the Volkswagen.

Brooke Anderson was stretched out on her back on a beach towel, wearing a bright red bikini swimsuit. Her eyes were closed, and a tiny portable radio near her head was turned down very low. It was still loud enough, though, for the music to prevent her from hearing footsteps descending the wooden staircase. The first she knew that she was no longer alone was when a shadow fell across her face.

Opening her eyes, she looked up at the immaculately white-suited Paul Terranova. She gave him an unfriendly scowl.

"Morning, Miss Anderson," he said.

Sitting up, she asked with a touch of weariness, "What do you want now?"

"You know what I want, Miss Anderson. Why don't you be reasonable?"

Brooke switched off the radio, dropped it into a tote bag lying on the towel, and removed a white swim cap from the bag. She stood up, the cap dangling from her fingers by its strap.

In a frigid voice she said, "Following me here was a

waste of time, because I have nothing more I want to talk with you about."

"Don't turn down offers before you get them, Miss Anderson. How much is your publisher paying you for your manuscript?"

"None of your business, Mr. Terranova."

He gave her his most charming smile. "Suppose I tripled that offer?"

Simply ignoring the question, she pulled on her swim cap.

"All right, Miss Anderson. How much do you want for it?"

"It's not for sale," she said in a definite voice. "Neither am I. And I'm not going to be frightened by any more of your threats. If something should happen to me, I promise you that what I found out about Moonshadows will still reach my publisher, with instructions to forward a copy to the Senate Investigative Committee."

She started toward the water. Reaching out, he grabbed her by an arm and yanked her back. Glaring into her face, he said in a guttural voice, all trace of his former charm gone, "You're way out of your league, little girl. I know you have someone at Moonshadows working with you. I'm going to find whoever it is, and find your manuscript too. We can do it the nice way, with your help, or we can do it the ugly way."

He managed to frighten her, but not to suppress her spirit. Glaring back at him, she said in a voice that quavered only slightly, "Whichever way you do it, Mr. Terranova, you're still going to wind up with a subpoena and a lot of interesting questions to answer."

She gave her arm a sudden jerk to free it. Before he could reach out again, she had wheeled around and was running into the ocean. When she reached hip-deep water, she made a shallow dive and began swimming.

After angrily watching her swim toward the floating platform for a few moments, Terranova did an about-face and crossed the sand to the wooden stairs. When

he reached the top, he turned to look back. The girl was about halfway to the platform.

Taking out his cigarette case, he snapped it open, took out a cigarette and stuck it into his mouth. Turning the mirrored inner surface of the lid toward the ocean, and the sun, he reflected a flash of sunlight toward the floating platform. When he saw a bare arm reach up from behind the platform to signal acknowledgment, he put the case away, took out a matching silver lighter to light the cigarette in his mouth, and leaned against a front fender of the Rolls Royce waiting for Inga.

Out at the float Inga waited until Brooke Anderson was within about twenty-five feet, then submerged and glided beneath the float toward the swimming girl. She rose beneath Brooke when the girl was about ten feet from the float, jerked her beneath the water by the legs and drove her fist into Brooke's solar plexus.

The air was driven out of the younger woman, but she still put up a fight. A powerful kick broke her assailant's grip, and she shot to the surface to gulp in more air. Inga instantly pulled her under again, though, and this time smashed a stunning blow to the side of her neck, immediately followed by another to her kidney. Brooke tried to kick free again, but now half unconscious, she was no match for the stronger woman. Inga dived, carrying her down and down until she had to expell the little air left in her lungs and draw in water.

Two

Jill Munroe had just locked her front door behind her and had dropped the keys into her purse when the phone began to ring inside. Fumbling in the bottom of the purse for the keys, she found them and managed to get the door unlocked again by the second ring. She was a shapely, lovely girl in her early twenties, dressed in shorts and a tank top, with a profusion of ash-blonde hair curling around her shoulders.

She made it to the phone in the middle of the third ring, just before the answering device attached to the phone cut in with the taped message she had left on it. "Hello," she said breathlessly.

A cultured male voice said in her ear, "Time to go to work, angel."

"Charlie!" she said with a strange mixture of pleasure and despair. "Your timing is terrible. Ten seconds more and I'd have been on my way to Santa Anita."

"Playing horses is a vice," Charlie Townsend said virtuously. "I may have saved you from pauperism. Come quickly, and as you are."

"All right, Charlie," she said with resignation. "Be right there."

A few miles away Sabrina Duncan was painting the ceiling of her kitchen when the phone rang. She was a tall, beautiful brunette in her early twenties who, even in paint-spattered coveralls and with a dish towel wrapped protectively around her head, managed to convey the regal air of a princess. Descending the stepladder, she dropped her paint roller into the roller pan and picked up the kitchen wall phone.

"Hello," she said.

A familiar voice said in her ear, "Time to go to work, angel."

"Charlie!" she said. "After not hearing from you for two weeks, why did you have to pick today? I'm up to my elbows in paint."

"Jill complained about the timing too, angel," Charlie said reprovingly. "You girls are getting lazy from disuse. Come quickly, and as you are."

"As I am!" Sabrina said on a high note. "I'm painting the kitchen, Charlie. I look terrible."

"From the way Bosley describes you, I find that hard to imagine, angel. Come at once."

There was a click and the phone went dead.

Kelly Garrett had just stepped from the shower when the phone rang. She was a slim, soft-featured girl in her early twenties with dark brown hair and dancing eyes. She answered on her bedside extension.

"Hello?"

"Charlie, angel. Time to go to work."

"All right, Charlie. When?"

"Right now, angel. Come as you are."

Kelly giggled.

"What's funny, angel?"

"I'd be arrested en route, Charlie. I haven't a stitch on."

"In that case, take time to jump into something," Charlie told her. "But don't tarry to make up your face. You're the last one I called."

"I'll be quick, Charlie," she assured him.

The three girls known as Charlie's Angels were about as feminine looking as girls come, and were just as feminine as they looked. But it was by no means a helpless femininity. All three had graduated together from the Los Angeles Police Academy. Their stints as policewomen had established records for briefness, though; they were still brand-new recruits when they were individually approached by a man named John Bosley, who made each an identical and unrefusable offer.

John Bosley was a cheerful, round-faced, slightly plump man of fifty, with a full head of dark hair,

neatly parted and worn moderately short. His proposition was that the girls resign from the LAPD to work for a private investigator named Charles Townsend. Their jobs would require only periodic duty, with more time off than work, but they would have to be available for immediate call to duty at all times. Each would be furnished a phone attachment on which she would be required to tape-record exactly where she could be reached every time she left home. Bosley told them that while the work might be dangerous at times, they would never meet their employer personally, although they would often talk to him on the phone. Their contact with Charles Townsend would always be through Bosley.

The inducement that made this strange proposition unrefusable was the salary, which was considerably higher than they could ever expect to earn as policewomen. At Police Academy they had become close friends, and they discussed Bosley's proposition at length before accepting it. It wasn't that any of them had any real doubts about the advantages of the offer, but only that there was tacit agreement that either they would all accept, or none would. The final vote for acceptance was unanimous.

In a quiet section of Beverly Hills there was a square, two-story building of tan brick and old-fashioned design. A bronze plaque next to the high, brass-bound oaken double doors simply read Townsend Investigations.

John Bosley parked his car in front of the building, lifted an attaché case from the seat beside him and entered the building. There was a high-ceilinged entry hall with a staircase to the second floor just opposite the entrance. To his left was a wide sliding door, open at the moment, through which he could see the three angels restlessly waiting for him in the inner sanctum.

That room was large, thickly carpeted and expensively furnished. Although there was a desk with a telephone on it, it was more like a drawing room than an office. There was a sofa, several overstuffed chairs, end tables, a large cocktail table, and a bar in one

corner. A number of original and extremely valuable oils hung on the walls.

Blonde Jill Munroe was seated on the edge of the desk, one leg impatiently swinging back and forth. The regal-looking Sabrina Duncan was standing near the window, where she had been gazing out with equal impatience. Only Kelly Garrett seemed relaxed. She sat in the center of the sofa, sipping a glass of orange juice she had poured herself at the bar.

Bosley glanced at Kelly's cutoff jeans and halter top, Sabrina's paint-splattered coveralls, and Jill's shorts and tank top. In a facetious tone he said, "No need to have dressed so formally just for little me, ladies."

Sabrina said with a touch of resentment, "After all the rush, we sit here cooling our heels for over an hour. I would have liked to change clothes."

"I would have liked to put on some makeup," Kelly said.

Bosley examined her clean-scrubbed face. "You don't need it," he assured her.

Dimpling, Kelly said, "You're working your way into my heart, Bosley."

Jill said, "You're lucky we even showed, Bosley. Charlie caught me on the way to Santa Anita."

In an amused voice Kelly asked, "Another one of your crazy long shots?"

"Friend of mine says this horse is a sure thing," Jill informed her loftily.

Kelly grinned. "Uh-huh. That's what my foster father used to say, right before he blew the grocery money."

Sabrina said, "Bosley, I was right in the middle of painting my apartment. I didn't even have time to clean my roller properly, so it's probably ruined. Then you take an hour to show."

"I was held up by Charlie," Bosley explained. "Take your anger out on him, if you wish, when he comes on the squawk box."

Opening his attaché case, Bosley took out a slide photo cartridge and put it into a projection machine sitting on a small table. When he pressed a button,

a screen lowered from the ceiling. Bosley switched on the projection machine and a test pattern slide showed on the screen. After focusing the projector, he switched it off again.

The red phone on the desk rang. Bosley lifted the receiver and laid it next to the squawk box on the desk. He said, "All present and accounted for, sir."

From the squawk box Charlie's voice said, "Thank you, Bosley. Sorry to interrupt your pursuits of happiness on a gorgeous day like today, angels, but I've had an emergency come up that needs the feminine touch. This one came in from my ex-wife, along with a request for more alimony."

Sabrina said in a surprised voice, "I didn't know you were married, Charlie."

"Don't sound so disapproving, Sabrina," Charlie admonished. "You've been too, remember?"

"Yes," she said. "But I don't have to pay alimony."

Jill asked wistfully, "Was she nice, Charlie?"

"Very. But once was enough to convince me I'm not monogamous by nature."

"What a shame," Kelly said. "Any children?"

Bosley said in a chiding tone, "Now, Kelly, you know Charlie doesn't like to answer personal questions."

"True," Charlie's voice said with a chuckle. "However, I take no offense, Kelly. It's just that thoughts of my marriage tend to remind me of the fellow who woke up one morning to find out that he was dead. It ruined what otherwise could have been a beautiful day."

As usual Charlie's charm killed whatever resentment the girls had developed from waiting for Bosley after all the rush. Smiling, Sabrina asked, "What do you have for us, Charlie?"

The voice from the squawk box said, "An old friend, Sabrina. George Anderson, a helluva sailor. Ship's captain until his eyesight went a dozen or so years ago. Now he's blind, in retirement. Are we ready, Bosley?"

"All set, sir," Bosley said.

He pressed another button and metal shutters low-

ered over the windows, darkening the room. A color slide appeared on the screen. Two young male surfers and two men in the tan uniforms of sheriff's deputies were standing on a sand beach, circling the body of a young woman in a bright red bikini swimsuit.

Charlie's voice said, "A body was found by some surfers yesterday, washed up on a beach near the village of Seacliffe."

Bosley pressed the slide-change button, and a second slide was projected on the screen. This was a close-up of the bikinied girl's body.

"George Anderson's daughter, Brooke," Charlie's voice said. "Incidentally, Seacliffe is the site of Moonshadows, one of a chain of status resort hotels financed by an eastern conglomerate."

A series of color slides followed, showing various views of the hotel. There was a view of the plush lobby, a cocktail lounge, a dining room, some tennis courts, a swimming pool, a railed stairway leading downward to a sand beach, and a shot of the beach.

When the series was finished, Sabrina said dryly, "A playground in the sun for decadent adults."

Bosley said, "Brooke was an investigative journalist. She lived in Seacliffe near the resort, and indicated in a letter written to her father the day before she was found dead that she was working on an explosive Watergate-like story concerning Moonshadows."

"Subject of story?" Kelly asked.

Charlie's voice said, "George Anderson doesn't know, angels. Brooke said in the letter that she'd be writing him again, with details. But the second letter didn't arrive. He does know that the resort director, one Paul Terranova, was someone Brooke was frightened of."

Bosley said, "And she mentioned a second name in connection with her story, a William Dignam. And also that she was working with an informant."

"Charlie, does the informant think Brooke was murdered?" Sabrina asked.

Charlie said, "Brooke never spelled out who he or she was, Sabrina."

"William Dignam," Kelly said. "Could he be the informant?"

"It's a possibility," Charlie's voice said. "You find that informant, and you'll probably find the key to the case. Bosley will give you your covers. Take care, angels. If Brooke Anderson was murdered by someone connected with Moonshadows, you'll be combing dangerous territory."

"What about you, Charlie?" Jill asked hopefully. "Are you going to be with us on this one?"

In a tone of regret Charlie's voice said, "I truly would love to be with you, angel, but I'm anchored in on another caper."

He was, in a sense. At least his yacht was anchored. As he sat in a deck chair, talking on the ship-to-shore phone, he had a beautiful view of the marina, and an even more beautiful view of two supple young ladies who were sunning themselves on deck in skimpy bikini swimsuits. The young ladies were identical twins.

"Can we believe you, Charlie?" Jill asked suspiciously. "Are you really working on another case?"

"Oh, definitely," Charlie said smoothly. "Twice as hard as the usual affair. Double trouble, you might say."

He hung up the phone and smiled at the twins. They smiled back, warmly.

Three

John Bosley pressed a series of buttons that raised the window shutters to let in daylight, switched off the projection machine, and raised the screen upward and out of sight. Kelly got up from the sofa to carry her empty orange juice glass over to the bar.

She said to Bosley, "Charlie said you'd explain our covers."

He nodded. "You're a free-lance photographer, currently on assignment from *Fashion Daily* in New York City to do a color spread on high-fashion west coast vacation resorts. You've just finished shooting La Costa, down toward San Diego, and Moonshadows is next on your agenda."

From his attaché case he removed three large manila envelopes, and handed one to Kelly. Opening it, she drew out a New York State driver's license bearing her name and photograph, a number of credit cards on New York City stores, and a personalized checkbook on a New York bank. There was also a sheet of bond with some typing on it.

Glancing over the sheet, she said, "I see I have an apartment on Fifth Avenue. I must be a pretty good photographer to have made all those magazines. *Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Mademoiselle.*" Then she looked up with a puzzled frown on her face. "I can understand why I should know the names of the photo editors of all those magazines, but why do I have to memorize their physical descriptions?"

"Just Charlie's usual thoroughness," Bosley said. "In the remote chance you run into somebody per-

sonally acquainted with one of the editors you've worked with."

Kelly nodded. "Charlie never misses a beat, does he?" she said, impressed. "I suppose, as usual, everything in here will stand up to investigation?"

"Of course," Bosley told her, in a tone implying he thought the question silly. "The photo editor at *Fashion Daily* will indeed confirm that you're on assignment from there, if anyone asks him. The manager of the Fifth Avenue apartment house will confirm that you're a tenant. And there is money in that checking account in New York."

"How nice," Kelly said brightly. "I need some new dresses."

"Its use is strictly limited to expenses," Bosley said with a frown. "And I shall personally audit the account after it is closed out."

He handed a manila envelope to Jill. Opening it, she also drew out a driver's license, some credit cards, a checkbook, and a sheet of paper with her new background and her instructions typed on it. After examining the first three items, she looked up in faint surprise.

"Nevada driver's license?" she said. "And Las Vegas charge plates and bank account?"

"Read your dossier," Bosley instructed.

After studying the sheet, Jill looked up. "Tennis pro, eh? Charlie's ruining my amateur standing. When the caper's over, do I get to use whatever's left in the checking account at the Vegas tables?"

"When the caper's over, the account will be closed out before you could even get to Vegas in a jet," Bosley said firmly.

Jill emitted a sigh of mock disappointment. After studying the typed sheet again, she said, "This says I'm supposed to get myself employed as a tennis instructor at Moonshadows. How do I swing that?"

"The way has been paved for a temporary job. There are two instructors, a man named Dale Parker and a woman named Lora Stebbins. Lora has been induced to take a two-week emergency leave of absence because of a dying father back in Ohio. Actually her

father died when she was a little girl, but she jumped at the chance for an all-expense-paid vacation."

"Then I'd better get my application in fast," Jill said. "Before somebody else beats me to it."

"I would suggest you head for Moonshadows right after this meeting," Bosley agreed.

He handed the third envelope to Sabrina. When she opened it, she was surprised to find nothing in it but her instruction sheet and a dozen business cards for the Los Angeles law firm of Tyler, Bloomstien and Gopher. In the lower left-hand corner of each card was printed *Sabrina Duncan, Attorney-at-Law,* and an extension number.

Looking up, Sabrina said, "Gopher? Is that for real?"

"Sebastian Gopher," Bosley assured her. "It's a bona fide law firm. You're too young to merit a partnership, but an inquiry to any of the partners will elicit the information that you're an employee of the firm."

Opening the envelope farther, Sabrina peered into it. "No checkbook?" she inquired.

"Use your own and submit an expense voucher," Bosley said. "You're supposed to be a resident of Los Angeles. That's why you have no new driver's license or credit cards. You can even use your real home address."

Sabrina looked over her dossier and instructions. Her sheet had considerably less typing on it than the other two, because less background information on her new identity was necessary. There was merely the date of her supposed graduation from the UCLA law school, the date she passed her bar exams, her date of employment by Tyler, Bloomstien and Gopher, and the full names and physical descriptions of the three partners.

Glancing around at all three girls, Bosley asked, "Any questions?"

Sabrina asked, "May I take the time to change out of my painting clothes before I head for Seacliffe?"

"Very funny," Bosley said. "Any serious questions?"

When there was no answer, he said, "Okay, ladies. Good hunting."

Jill Munroe went home only long enough to pack a suitcase and pick up her tennis racquet. Then she headed for Seacliffe without even changing out of her shorts and tank top.

The Moonshadows Hotel was a six-story building overlooking the ocean. The spacious grounds included a swimming pool surrounded by deck chairs and umbrella-shaded tables, a whirlpool bath, and three tennis courts. There was also an eighteen-hole golf course.

It was midafternoon when Jill arrived. Instead of taking the circular driveway that went past the main entrance to the lobby, and leaving her car with a parking attendant, she drove onto the parking lot on the south side of the building herself, as befitted a job seeker. Entering the building by a side door, she asked a young and rather effeminate desk clerk where to find the hotel manager.

"We have a *director,* not a manager, madam," he informed her a bit snobbishly. "Are you a guest?"

"No, I want to apply for a job as a tennis instructor."

He looked her over as though he were a coach judging a potential athlete, registering faint disapproval at the amount of suntanned skin exposed by her shorts and tank top, which led her to the conclusion that he was not greatly interested in women. Then he lifted a phone, dialed a number and spoke into it briefly, his tone too low for her to hear what he was saying.

When he hung up he said, "Mr. Terranova will be right out."

A rather handsome, trimly built man in his late forties, attired in a white leisure suit, appeared from a door to the left of the registration desk. He also looked Jill over, but with an expression totally different from that of the desk clerk. He made no attempt to conceal either his admiration or his frank interest in her as a woman.

When he had examined her thoroughly from head to toe, he gave her a charming smile and said, "I'm Paul Terranova. You're a tennis instructor?"

She nodded. "Jill Munroe. Didn't Lora mention me?"

Terranova shook his head. "You're a friend of hers?"

"One of her oldest," Jill said. "I phoned her from LA last night just after she'd received word about her father. She suggested I might be interested in filling in for her while she was away."

"You live in LA?"

"No, Las Vegas. I've been visiting a sister in Los Angeles prior to a scheduled ocean voyage to Hawaii. I only phoned Lora to say hello, but a two-week job would fit in fine. My ship leaves in eighteen days."

"Come into the office and we'll discuss it," Terranova said.

He let her precede him into the office and closed the door behind her. Indicating a chair before his desk, he rounded the desk to seat himself behind it. There was a large, moon-faced man seated in a corner, thumbing through a magazine and breathing rather heavily, but the hotel director made no effort to introduce him.

When both were seated, Terranova asked, "How much experience have you had? I don't mean in playing, but in teaching tennis. What we need is an instructor who knows how to get along with the kind of clientele we get."

"Mainly rich, bored, and past middle-age?" she inquired with a knowing smile. "I assume you have a male instructor for the rich, bored and aging female guests."

He gave a sardonic nod. "You understand. Your ability to entertain is really more important than your ability to teach tennis. But of course we do have guests who are actually interested in improving their games. Where have you worked?"

"I've been instructing at Caesar's Palace for the past year. Before that I was at the Hilton, before that at a couple of dude ranches in Arizona. I'm still employed by Caesar's. I'm just on a ninety-day leave of absence to go to Hawaii."

Picking up his desk phone, Terranova dialed a single number, then said into the phone, "Get me the personnel manager at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas."

Jill was thankful that Charlie was always so thorough. Without his advance arrangements, her cover would have been blown before she started. As it was, Terranova seemed impressed by what the personnel director told him.

When he hung up, he said, "You got a high recommendation. But why are you interested in such a short-term fill-in job? Why didn't you just stay in Vegas a couple of more weeks?"

Jill had rehearsed the answer to that question, along with the answers to numerous other possible questions, during the drive from Los Angeles. She was therefore able to answer without the slightest hesitation.

"I planned to spend some time with a friend in Los Angeles before my ship sailed. But he was unexpectedly transferred to Cleveland the day after I arrived. So I'm at loose ends. I also can use the money. I was so disappointed by Bart's transfer that I went on a shopping spree and spent more than I could afford."

This explanation seemed to satisfy Terranova, because he said, "All right, Jill. You're hired for the next two weeks. Two hundred dollars a week, plus a room, plus meals in the coffee shop. If you eat in any of the other dining rooms, you pay the bill yourself. And you can sign for food and nonalcoholic beverages only. You have to buy your own drinks."

"Fair enough," Jill said agreeably.

"You have luggage with you?"

She nodded. "I came prepared to move right in. I'm parked on the lot."

"Bring your car around front, and I'll have arrangements made by the time you get there. Just tell the desk clerk your name. You can start tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. Report to Dale Parker at the courts. He's the other pro."

"All right," Jill said, rising to her feet. "Thanks, Mr. Terranova."

"You're welcome," he said, giving her an intimate

smile. "Maybe during the next two weeks we can become better acquainted."

"That would be nice," she said, smiling back just as intimately.

The big moon-faced man in the corner was still thumbing through his magazine when she left. Just before she pulled the door closed behind her, he took out an aerosol mistometer and squirted both nostrils.

Four

When Kelly Garrett drove home from the meeting with Bosley, she also packed a suitcase. But she changed clothes, shedding her cutoff jeans and halter and putting on a smart-looking two-piece beige suit.

The typed sheet she had been given by Bosley included instructions to stop by a local camera shop to pick up equipment that Charlie had rented for her. At the shop she was given three cameras, a supply of film, and other photographic gear such as a light meter, a tripod and some special lenses.

A clerk explained all the equipment, and gave her a short lesson in photography. None of the cameras required flashbulbs for indoor shooting, she learned, providing there was normal lighting. Her basic camera was a small, compact one in a leather case that hung about the neck. The case was designed so that photographs could be taken simply by snapping off a lense cap and aiming the camera. A larger camera had a zoom lens, and could be either hand held or used with a tripod. The third was a mini-camera about the size of a package of cigarettes, which was designed for extremely close up work, such as photographing documents.

Kelly developed a healthy respect for the equipment when the clerk casually advised her to take good care of it, because its combined value was around seven thousand dollars.

Dropping the mini-camera in her purse and loading the rest of the equipment into the trunk of her car, she headed for Seacliffe.

When she wheeled her Cobra along the circular drive to halt before the main entrance to the Moonshadows Hotel, a uniformed doorman instantly opened the door for her. Giving him a dazzling smile and a flash of lovely thigh as she climbed from the car, she went around back to unlock and open the trunk.

"A bellman will bring in your luggage, miss," the doorman advised her.

"Not this part of it, he won't," Kelly informed him, lifting out the two camera cases and the case containing special photographic equipment. "I never let it out of my sight."

"Oh, are you a reporter, ma'am?" the doorman asked with interest.

"Sort of," Kelly admitted. "Journalist-photographer."

She handed him the car keys and was starting into the building when another car pulled up behind hers. Glancing around, she saw the doorman opening the door for Jill. Kelly continued on in, giving no sign of recognition.

The young man behind the registration desk asked Kelly if she had a reservation.

"No, do I need one?" she inquired.

"Oh, we can accommodate you, ma'am," he assured her politely, but with what struck Kelly as not a great deal of enthusiasm. "But if I hadn't asked you, and you had a reservation, and I failed to check it off, we might turn someone else away when we actually had room, don't you see?"

This gratuitous information, uttered with mild disapproval, astonished Kelly, who was unused to disapproval from men of any age, ever. Then she realized from the way he was looking at her that he simply didn't like women.

By the time she had filled out a registration card, a bellman had brought in her luggage and was standing by. Jill had also come in, and was waiting just behind Kelly.

After scanning the information on the registration card, the desk clerk thawed considerably. "I see you represent *Fashion Daily,* Miss Garrett," he said with interest, and without any of his previous disapproval. "I read it regularly." He eyed her cameras. "Out here from New York to do a story?"

"Yes," she said briefly, having no desire for extended conversation with the man.

The clerk handed the bellman a room key, then returned his attention to Kelly. "We're certain your stay will be a pleasant one, Miss Garrett," he said, now almost approving her. "You'll find a brochure in your room detailing our facilities. Tennis, golf, swimming, a charter boat for deep-sea fishing, a health and beauty spa. Whatever your wishes, we're certain Moonshadows can accommodate you."

"I'm sure you can," Kelly told him. Then, conscious of Jill behind her, she asked, "Do you offer tennis instruction?"

"Oh, yes. There is a male instructor on the courts from nine until noon and from two until five daily."

"A female instructor too, starting tomorrow," Jill said. "I just got the job."

Turning, Kelly said, "How nice. Perhaps I'll see you on the courts tomorrow. I'm Kelly Garrett, here from New York City."

"How do you do, Miss Garrett?" Jill said politely. "I'm Jill Munroe."

"Please call me Kelly, Jill. It's nice to know you."

"All right, Kelly," Jill agreed.

Turning back to the clerk, Kelly said, "Your director, Mr. Terranova, is he available?"

"He just went upstairs. However, it is his custom to have a cocktail either by the pool or in the cocktail lounge about five, which is only an hour off. May I give him a message?"

"Thank you," Kelly said. "I'll give it to him myself."

She moved on toward the elevators, where the bellman with her luggage was patiently waiting for her. Behind her she heard the clerk say to Jill, "Mr. Terranova told me you'll be with us for a couple of weeks, Miss Munroe. I've assigned you a room off the kitchen, with the cooks."

When Sabrina Duncan got home from the meeting with John Bosley, the first thing she did was strip off her paint-spattered coveralls and take a shower. She put on a smart light green pantsuit, packed a suitcase, and took off for Seacliffe.

Sabrina didn't drive to the Moonshadows Hotel. Instead she checked into a small motel just south of the village on the Pacific Coast Highway. After unloading her luggage and hanging up the items she didn't want wrinkled in the closet of her room, she got back in her car, drove on the short distance to where the frontage road veed up to the highway, and took it into Seacliffe.

She passed a sign reading Seacliffe. Pop. 1,850. Her typewritten instructions had included the address of Brooke Anderson's apartment house, and it was just beyond the population sign. She noted it as she passed, but did not stop to check it out.

There was only the single street through the village, and three cross streets, all leading east only, toward the cliff looming over the town. Gift shops, restaurants, and other establishments catering to tourists lined both sides of the street. Obviously the population figure of 1,850 included only year-round residents, because the sidewalks were crammed with strolling vacationers, most of them either in shorts or swimsuits.

The place she was looking for was in the very center of town. It was a small one-story frame building with a painted sign over its door reading Sheriff's Substation. Sabrina pulled into one of the four diagonal parking slots in front designated by a sign as reserved for persons with official business at the sub-station. Only one other slot was occupied, by a sheriff's car.

The door to the sub-station stood wide open, and

Sabrina walked in. The entire front part of the building was an office. Through an open door at the left rear, Sabrina could see a short hallway leading to a couple of barred cells. A closed door at rear right was lettered Lavatory.

A beefy, rugged-looking man of about forty, wearing a tan uniform and a badge, sat behind a desk facing the door, reading a newspaper. Glancing up as Sabrina entered, his rather stern features softened into an admiring smile. He folded the newspaper and rose to his feet.

"Yes, ma'am?" he inquired.

"Please keep your seat, sheriff," she said. "You are the sheriff, aren't you?"

"Deputy sheriff, ma'am. Sheriff's over at Riser, the county seat. I'm in charge of this sub-station, though. Name of Al Flynn." Reseating himself, he beamed up at her.

"How do you do, Mr. Flynn?" Sabrina said with a friendly smile.

Taking one of the business cards from her purse, she handed it to him. After studying it, he asked, "What can I do for you, councellor?"

Sabrina said, "Our law firm has been engaged by Brooke Anderson's publisher to attempt to locate the manuscript she's been working on. Did you handle the investigation of her death?"

The man's beaming smile was instantly erased. "Yes," he said, with what struck the girl as a strange wariness.

"Do you know anything about the manuscript?"

"No."

Sabrina waited a moment, but there was no elaboration on the blunt negative. Eventually she asked, "Did you know Brooke Anderson?"

"I'd seen her around the village. She'd lived here about a year. Town this little, you know everybody."

"Did you know she was working on a manuscript?"

"No."

"Strange," Sabrina said. "It was an exposé involving some kind of local criminal conspiracy. I should think

she would take the local police into her confidence."

"Well, she didn't."

"Are there any police here aside from you? A village marshal, perhaps?"

Flynn shook his head. "I got one assistant, and that's it. And Ed don't know anything I don't."

It was becoming increasingly apparent that the deputy for some reason didn't care to discuss the case, and had no intention of volunteering any information about it. Nevertheless Sabrina plowed on.

"Did you examine the deceased's apartment?" she asked.

"What for?" he inquired. "Why should I search the apartment of an accidental drowning victim?"

Sabrina had said *examine,* not *search.* His slip led her to believe he had searched it. Why he should lie about it, she had no idea, but she got an impression of growing but veiled hostility at her questions.

Changing tack, she asked, "Where was the body taken?"

"County morgue," Flynn said. "Over in Riser."

"Thank you, Deputy Flynn," she said with icy formality, then turned and walked out. The deputy sheriff watched as she climbed into her car, backed out, and drove off. Then he picked up the phone and dialed a number.

When a feminine voice said, "Moonshadows," Flynn said, "Mr. Terranova, please."

A moment later Paul Terranova's voice said, "Hotel director."

"Al Flynn, Paul," the deputy said. "A female lawyer was just here." Looking at the card she had given him, he read from it, "Sabrina Duncan, of the Los Angeles firm of Tyler, Bloomstien and Gopher."

"Gopher?" Terranova said. "Really? What did she want?"

"Brooke Anderson's publisher engaged her firm to try to locate the manuscript."

There was a long silence before Terranova asked, "What did you tell her?"

"Nothing."

"Good. If we couldn't find it, there's no reason to think this female lawyer can."

Flynn said, "Guess we kind of lucked out, her drowning just as she was starting to breath down our necks so heavy."

"Yes," the hotel director said. "That was a lucky coincidence, wasn't it?"

Five

The town of Riser was larger than Seacliffe, but much sleepier, because it was fifteen miles inland and lacked the tourist trade. The town limit marker informed Sabrina that the population was 5,200.

There was a town square with an old-fashioned red brick courthouse in its center. Sabrina parked, went inside and studied an office directory posted on the central corridor wall. The morgue and the coroner's office were both in the basement.

She took ancient stone stairs downward, feeling as though she were descending into a dungeon. At the end of a basement corridor she came to a door on her left labeled County Morgue, and another door immediately across the hall from it lettered Coroner's Office. She entered the latter.

It was a small office. A counter ran its length, and behind it was a desk with a phone on it and a typewriter on a stand. The rear wall was lined solidly with file cabinets.

A lean, grizzled man of about sixty was typing some kind of form. Glancing up as Sabrina entered, he smiled as admiringly as the deputy sheriff in Seacliffe had. He rose and went over to the counter.

"Afternoon," he said pleasantly.

"Hi. Is the coroner around?"

"You're looking at him, miss. I'm Dr. Huff."

When Sabrina looked surprised, he said with wry amusement, "Thought I was the office boy, huh?"

"Why no," she said quickly. "I just thought—" She halted to smile at him with reciprocal amusement. "Do they make you do your own typing?"

"Oh, they give me a part-time secretary, on call. More trouble getting her over here than doing it myself, though. Not enough work for a full-time secretary. Or a full-time coroner, for that matter. I'm only part-time too. You were lucky to catch me in. Usually out making house calls this time of day."

"You make house calls?" Sabrina said in a tone of astonishment.

The doctor grinned. "Lots of country doctors still do. Looks of you, you're from a big city, where nowadays they don't come even if you're dying. Send the fire department instead, with an inhalator."

Sabrina found herself liking the man. "I live in Los Angeles," she admitted. She handed him one of her cards.

After looking at it, Dr. Huff said, "What can I do for you?"

"You had a drowning over near Seacliffe yesterday. Woman named Brooke Anderson."

The coroner nodded.

"Has an autopsy been performed yet?"

He nodded again. "That's what I'm typing up."

"Could you tell me the results?"

"Sure. Matter of public record. She drowned."

Sabrina waited for elaboration. When she realized no more was forthcoming, she asked, "No hint of foul play?"

The doctor regarded her thoughtfully for a time before saying, "As I mentioned, postmortem results are public records. But that question kind of intrigues me. May I inquire why you asked it?"

Sabrina was about to give him the same story she had told Deputy Sheriff Flynn, but suddenly decided she could trust this man with the truth. She said, "We

were hired by her father to investigate her death. He thinks she was murdered."

His eyebrows shot up. "Oh? Why's he think that?"

"She was an investigative reporter, working on some sort of exposé. Her father doesn't know what or whom she was getting ready to expose, but she had written him that she felt she was in danger."

The coroner thought this over for some time before saying, "That rather compels me to schedule an inquest. I'll need the father's name and address, so that I can subpoena him."

"He's blind, and he lives some distance from here," Sabrina said. "I'll make a deal with you, doctor."

"What?"

"I'll save you the trouble of an inquest by giving you a full report of my investigation. In return, you tell me what you found that made you evade my question about foul play."

Grinning, he said, "Pretty sharp young lady, aren't you? Sure, I'm always ready for deals that save me work. It was nothing actually pointing to foul play. Just something a little strange. No question that death was by drowning. But there were three rather marked bruises on the victim's body. One on the left side of the neck, one on the stomach, and one on the back, over the left kidney."

Sabrina pursed her lips. "Could the body have been washed up on rocks?"

"Dead flesh doesn't bruise. They occurred while she was alive."

While Sabrina was thinking this over, he said, "It's such an indefinite thing that I had decided to ignore it and just designate it an accidental drowning—before you showed up. But now it strikes me as significant enough to leave the case open until you complete your investigation."

"What strikes you as significant?" Sabrina asked.

"The size and locations of the bruises. They were all the same small size, such as might be made by a fist, and were all in spots where someone who knew a lot about boxing might strike. The side of the neck, the

solar plexus and the kidney are all zones where a blow is likely to stun, or even to cause momentary paralysis."

Sabrina's eyes widened. "You think she was beaten unconscious before she drowned?"

"Don't put words in my mouth," he admonished. "For all I know, she bruised herself diving onto a floating log. All I think is that an investigation is justified, now that a possible motive for murder has surfaced. You can count on my full cooperation, Miss Duncan."

"Thanks, doctor," she said. "I'll keep you abreast of my progress."

At Moonshadows Paul Terranova was combining his daily rubdown with a business meeting. He lay on his stomach on a table in the massage room with a towel across his middle while Inga Svensen, clad in shorts and a halter, kneaded his back with her powerful hands. Harry West, the large, dark-chinned man who had been spying on Brooke Anderson with binoculars just before her death, was making an oral report, referring to notes in a small notebook he held. He stood at the head of the table, where Terranova could see him. In a corner sat the omnipresent Jock Koslo, periodically squirting mist up his nose.

"I'm still going through the personnel files," West said. "Kitchen, laundry, housekeeping, bellmen, the service departments. I've covered them all. I'm running a security check on every guest, staff member and employee. I'll turn up something soon, some connection to the Anderson girl. I'm sure of it."

Terranova growled, "You don't and you'll be back pounding a beat in Chicago and taking nickel-and-dime graft to feed your kids. You want to keep your easy job here as hotel dick, get off your duff. I want some results, and I want them fast!"

The big man shifted uneasily. "You'll get them. I'm working as fast as I can."

Terranova said, "That's enough, Inga," sat up on the table and pulled the towel across his front. Looking

over at Koslo, he asked, "What about the girl's apartment?"

Koslo used his mistometer before saying, "No more than last time. I used the keys from her purse to get in and went over everything, this time really thoroughly. Afraid I left it a mess."

"And you turned up nothing?"

"Well, I found a letter she'd written lying next to one of her typewriters. She had two, you know. This one is screwy. I hadn't noticed it first time I searched the place, but it's got no ribbon. Just makes funny impressions in the paper."

Rising, he took an envelope from his inside breast pocket and carried it over to Terranova.

Looking at the typed address on the envelope, the hotel director said, "George Anderson, Oceanside. That's down toward San Diego, isn't it?"

"Yeah," Koslo said. "Same last name as hers. Maybe her brother or father. But look at the funny letter."

The envelope hadn't been sealed. Opening it, Terranova drew out two folded sheets of typewriter paper. When he unfolded them, he found both blank. They were full of indentations, though. Terranova ran his fingers over one of the sheets.

"Braille," he said. "That second typewriter's a braille one. George Anderson must be blind."

Returning the sheets to the envelope, he handed it back to Koslo. "This could be what we're looking for. The County Center for the Blind over in Riser. Take this over there and get it translated."

"Okay," Koslo said.

Putting the envelope back in his pocket, he left the room. Terranova slid from the table, tossed aside his towel and began putting his clothing back on.

"You want anything more from me?" Harry West asked uneasily.

"Yeah, I want you to get back to work," the hotel director growled at him.

The hotel detective left also. The big Swedish masseuse watched Terranova finish dressing. When he was

ready to leave, he went over and casually kissed her on the mouth. She looked after him as he went out the door with an expression of blind worship on her face.

When Sabrina got back to Seacliffe, she parked across the street from the apartment house where Brooke Anderson had lived. As she started across the street, a sheriff's car drove by, and she waited for it to pass. Deputy Al Flynn was driving it. He gave her a short nod, and she wiggled her fingers at him.

It was a two-story building with an outside door to each unit. A balcony ran the length of the upper floor, and there were three metal stairways leading down from it. The center unit on the first floor had a sign on the door reading Manager.

When Sabrina rang the bell, a thin, weedy man of about fifty answered.

"You the manager?" she asked.

"Yes, but there won't be a vacancy for about a week. One of our tenants drowned at the beach yesterday, but her stuff's still in the apartment. Relatives are supposed to come after it in about a week."

"I'm not looking for an apartment," Sabrina told him. "I'm here about the deceased tenant you mentioned."

She gave him one of her cards. After studying it, he said uneasily, "She didn't drown here, you know. She was swimming at a beach a good mile from here."

"No one's bringing an action against you," Sabrina said with a smile. "I represent Miss Anderson's publisher. She was working on a manuscript when she died, and her publisher asked us to try to locate it."

"Oh," he said, relieved. "I knew she was a writer, but I don't know what she was working on."

"Could you let me into her apartment to see if the manuscript's there?" she asked.

After thinking this over, the manager shrugged. "Can't see the harm in that. If you find it, think I ought to phone her father to see if it's okay for you to take it off, though. He's down in Oceanside. She gave me his number a while back, to phone in case

of emergency." He made a face. "Had to phone him the bad news yesterday."

"I have no objection to that," Sabrina said. "But there's not much point in phoning him until we see if the manuscript can be found."

The manager led Sabrina up the center stairway and used his passkey to open a door numbered 206. He followed her inside.

Both stopped still. The front room was a shambles. Books were strewn about. Papers from a desk had been dumped on the floor. Sofa and chair cushions had been tossed aside.

Sabrina said wryly, "Looks like somebody beat me to it."

"This is terrible!" the apartment manager said. "I'm going to phone the sheriff!"

Turning, he rushed out, and Sabrina could hear his feet clattering down the metal stairs.

Six

The kitchenette was as torn apart as the front room. Sabrina moved on into a bedroom. It too was a shambles. Dresser drawers had been upended, clothing from the closet had been tossed on the floor, and the mattress had been pushed off the bed.

Although she was sure the messy searcher had been looking for the manuscript, and must have found it if it had been there, Sabrina had been taught at the LAPD Academy to be thorough. She made a quick but comprehensive search of the apartment.

She found what she expected to find: no sign of the manuscript. She did find something of interest,

though. One of the two typewriters in the front room was a braille machine.

There was a bedside phone. Standing up because there was no mattress on the bed, Sabrina dialed the operator and placed a collect call to Charlie Townsend's unlisted number.

A sultry-voiced woman answered the phone. When the operator told her there was a collect call from Sabrina Duncan, the woman said, "Why sure, honey. I'm sure Charlie'll accept reverse charges from her."

A moment later Charlie's voice said cheerily, "Hi, angel."

"Who was that throaty babe?" Sabrina asked.

"My cleaning lady, angel. What's up?"

"I'm at Brooke Anderson's apartment, Charlie. Somebody's been through it like the average tornado. Probably looking for the story she was working on about Moonshadows. I've gone over the apartment myself, but there's nothing here that adds up. Only thing interesting I could find is a braille typewriter."

"For corresponding with her father," Charlie said. "Any other developments?"

"The investigating officer was a Deputy Flynn, who's in charge of the Seacliffe Sheriff's Sub-station. I found him strangely uncooperative, almost hostile. The county coroner is a doll, though. Death was definitely by drowning, but he found a peculiar thing. There were three bruises on the body, all fist sized, and in places a pro might hit someone he was beating up."

"Oh?" Charlie said with interest. "He suspects murder, then?"

"He wouldn't commit himself to that. Just thinks the bruises justify further investigation. He's willing to give one hundred percent cooperation."

"Good. I suggest your next move, Sabrina, be a visit to Brooke's father. I believe his address is in your instructions."

"Yes, but George Anderson lives at some distance, Charlie, and it's nearly six P.M. I think I'll hold off on that until morning."

"As you please, angel. There's no rush. I must

leave you now. The cleaning lady wants me to move my feet."

That was true, but not for the reason Charlie implied. He was seated in a patio deck chair, wearing nothing but shorts, with one bare foot on a footstool. A delectable blonde in short-shorts and a skimpy halter knelt before him, giving him a pedicure. She had finished one foot, and was motioning him to put it down and raise the other one to the footstool.

As Sabrina hung up the phone, she heard a faint sound and turned to find Deputy Flynn standing in the bedroom doorway, regarding her coldly.

"You got here fast," Sabrina said. "It can't be more than five minutes since the manager phoned you."

"Nobody phoned me. I just dropped by to see what you're up to. No one gave you permission to be in here."

Sabrina shrugged. "The manager didn't seem to think there'd be a problem."

"The manager didn't check with me," Flynn said harshly. "Did you tear this place up like this?"

"Of course not. The reason the manager went to phone you is because we found it this way."

"What are you looking for?"

"The manuscript I mentioned to you. Plus possible evidence that she was murdered."

He looked at her sharply. "Her lungs were full of water, and there wasn't a mark on her. Death was due to drowning. An accident, pure and simple."

"Maybe, but a couple of things suggest otherwise. For instance, anyone who knew her knew Brooke Anderson was a strong swimmer, in any kind of water. I think that raises some doubts."

In a tone beginning to show anger, Flynn said, "It was ninety-three in the shade on the beach yesterday, and the water was still winter cold. Can happen to the best of swimmers. Abdominal cramps. They jackknife you right up. You panic and never come out of it."

"Maybe, but I said a couple of things. Want to hear the other?"

"What?"

"You said there wasn't a mark on her. But I stopped at the coroner's office. He says there were fresh bruises on the body."

That seemed to startle him. After a time he said slowly, "Ed and I didn't notice any bruises."

"Probably you and your partner didn't examine her as closely as the coroner. I assure you there were bruises. Three of them, about the size a fist would make."

After thinking this over, he said in a tone that made Sabrina think he was trying to convince himself as much as her, "Maybe she drifted onto some rocks."

"The coroner says flesh doesn't bruise after death. She was beaten before she drowned. And take a look at this place. My guess is it was ransacked by her murderer, looking for the same manuscript I am."

That upset him considerably, but his irrational reaction was to become angry. "I'll decide who was looking for what," he said in a harsh voice. "Now I want you out of here before I lose my temper."

"You seem already to have lost it, Mr. Flynn," Sabrina said dryly. "I appreciate your hospitality. You should be on the Seacliffe Chamber of Commerce."

"Lady, I *am* the Chamber of Commerce."

He stepped aside from the bedroom doorway and made a savage gesture with his thumb toward the outer door. Elevating her nose, Sabrina walked past him and through the apartment. Outside she met the apartment house manager coming up the stairs.

"The fuzz is already here," she said to him.

He looked surprised. "That's a switch. Usually they move like molasses around here."

She continued on down without bothering to explain that Deputy Flynn had arrived on his own initiative.

A few minutes before five Kelly Garrett came down from her room wearing beach sandals and a robe. She carried a tote bag, and the small camera in the leather case hung from her neck. At the pool she took off her robe to disclose a pink one-piece swimsuit, sat in a

deck chair, and began to oil herself with suntan lotion. Sunset was still more than three hours off.

Two other women, both middle-aged, were sunning themselves in nearby deck chairs. A teenage girl was floating on her back in the pool, and a teenage boy was showing off for her by doing fancy dives.

Kelly had just finished oiling herself when a woman's voice said from a nearby public address system speaker, "Mr. Terranova, you are wanted in the cocktail lounge."

Taking a towel from her tote bag, Kellly wiped her hands of oil. Replacing the towel, she rose, put her robe back on, picked up her tote bag and headed for the cocktail lounge.

The place was well crowded, since it was the height of the cocktail hour. After a glance around, Kelly started for the bar, with the intention of asking the bartender to point out the hotel director. But before she got there, a handsome, well-built man in his late forties, wearing a snow-white leisure suit, came in from the lobby. Pausing to watch him, she wondered if he was Paul Terranova.

The man in the white suit headed for a table at which three other people already sat. One was a striking blonde amazon in shorts and a halter. One was a large, heavy-featured man with a jutting chin and a bad case of five o'clock shadow. The third was a graying, dignified-looking man of perhaps fifty.

The man in the white suit seated himself between the woman and the dark-jawed man, across from the dignified-looking man. The other three already had drinks before them. The moment the newcomer sat down, a cocktail waitress who must have spotted him entering set a straight-up manhattan before him. That convinced Kelly that he was indeed the hotel director.

Making her way over to the table, Kelly moved in between the man with the five o'clock shadow and the dignified-looking man.

"Mr. Terranova?" she inquired of the man in the white suit.

All four people at the table looked at her, the men

with appreciation, the woman with a frown. The hotel director said, "Yes?"

"I'm Kelly Garrett, Mr. Terranova, on assignment from *Fashion Daily*. Photographer. I'm sure you've seen my stuff. *Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Mademoiselle.* I've been working out of New York mostly." She gave him a sexy smile. "But this is my second trip here, and I'm really getting turned on by this California sun."

Smiling, Terranova said, "I'm sure I have seen your work, Miss Garrett." He glanced at the dignified man. "Doctor, if you'd be kind enough to give Miss Garrett your chair, we can discuss our business later this evening."

Looking slightly surprised, the man said, "Yes, of course." He got up and carried his drink over to the bar.

Looking after him, Kelly said apologetically, "I'm sorry if I interrupted anything."

"Don't be," Terranova said, giving her another smile. "You're much more attractive than the good doctor. And I'm sure he doesn't mind. Please sit down."

Kelly took the empty chair.

Indicating the blonde amazon, Terranova said, "Inga Svensen, our masseuse." He nodded toward the dark-chinned man. "Harry West, our hotel detective."

Kelly told both she was glad to meet them. Terranova signaled to a nearby cocktail waitress, and she came over. Kelly ordered a margarita.

When the waitress moved off again, the hotel director asked, "Now what can I do for you, Miss Garrett?"

"I was told you were the man to see if I wanted to do a photo layout here."

"I'm the man," Terranova agreed. "But I'm afraid we have a slight problem with any photo work right now."

Kelly hiked her eyebrows. "I'd be happy to have you check my credentials."

Terranova made a dismissing gesture to indicate that wasn't the problem. "We have a board of directors to consider. Any publicity has to be okayed by them."

In a puzzled voice Kelly said. "I'm not sure I understand what the hassle is. I just finished doing La Costa, and they couldn't have been more cooperative."

The cocktail waitress brought Kelly's drink. When she had moved off again, Terranova said, "Why don't you just relax for a day or so, enjoy our facilities. I'll talk to the directors and see if I can get you a go-ahead. But I can't promise anything."

Kelly took a sip of her drink, gazing at him intimately over the top of her glass. When she set it down again, she said, "I would appreciate anything you can do. I have a deadline to meet, and an editor who will hang me by my thumbnails if I blow it. In the meantime, I'm sure you won't mind if I snap a few preliminary shots of you and the grounds."

She raised the camera hanging around her neck, pointed it at him and took two quick shots before anyone could react. But then the hotel detective grabbed the camera from around her neck and handed it to Terranova.

Smiling from the teeth out, Terranova asked quietly, "Do you have a hearing problem, Miss Garrett? *No* photographs. Not until I sanction it."

He removed the camera from its leather case, opened it to take out the film, replaced it in the case and handed it back to her.

Switching back suddenly to a friendly tone, he said, "Now, like I said, relax. Enjoy your stay with my compliments." He studied her quizzically. "You look a little tense right now. Why don't you start in the health spa?" He looked at the big blonde. "Inga, why don't you give the pretty lady a massage first thing in the morning?" He turned back to Kelly. "I recommend it. Inga's the best."

Looking from one to the other, Kelly shrugged. "All right. Why not. I'm sorry you're so camera shy." She turned on her sexiest smile. "But maybe you'll give me a private sitting after we get to know each other better."

"We may be able to arrange that," he said with interest.

Inga Svensen looked at Kelly with flared nostrils. Glancing at the woman's large hands, Kelly wondered if it would be wise to put herself in the woman's power on a massage table.

As soon as Kelly finished her cocktail, she excused herself to go upstairs and dress for dinner. The three remaining at the table watched her in silence as she walked away.

When she had disappeared into the lobby, Harry West growled, "Another magazine snoop."

"Bug her room," Terranova said. "Tell the operators to log her calls. Assign one of the maids to go over her luggage. If she steps out of line, or asks too many questions, I want her reservation canceled. Permanently."

Inga's eyes developed an anticipatory glitter. "May I do the canceling?" she asked.

Seven

Paul Terranova was crossing the lobby from the cocktail lounge to the dining room, en route to meet his wife for dinner, when he was paged again.

The voice from the PA system speaker said, "Phone call for Mr. Terranova."

The hotel director turned into his office to take it. The call was from Deputy Sheriff Flynn.

"That female lawyer is still nosing around," Flynn reported. "I caught her in the Anderson girl's apartment. I'm there now."

"She didn't find anything there," Terranova said.

"I know. Your man Koslo is sure a sloppy searcher. The hotel manager filed a burglary complaint."

"Sloppy, maybe, but also thorough."

Flynn said, "Two things I'm calling about, Paul. First, the Duncan girl was talking on the phone when I got here. I only overheard the tail end of her conversation, but she called whoever she was talking to Charlie. Probably one of the partners in her law firm. From the conversation, I gathered that Charlie instructed her to contact somebody named George Anderson. She said Anderson lived too far away to do it today, so she'd hold off until morning."

"George Anderson lives in Oceanside," Terranova said. "Koslo found a letter addressed to him in the girl's apartment. Written in braille."

"Oh? You know who he is, then?"

"Not yet, but I imagine I will when Jock gets back. He took it over to the County Center for the Blind to get it translated. What's the second thing you called about?"

"Sabrina Duncan talked to the coroner. He told her there were some bruises on Brooke Anderson's body."

"Maybe she drifted onto some rocks," Terranova suggested.

"My first reaction, Paul, until the Duncan girl reminded me that dead flesh doesn't bruise. She seems to think the girl was beaten just before she drowned."

There was a long silence, eventually broken by the hotel director. "What do you make of it, Al?"

"I don't know. But remember what I've said from the beginning about where I draw the line?"

"Yes."

"If it turns out that our lucky coincidence wasn't all that much of a coincidence, bets are off, Paul, even if the whole deal goes down the drain."

"Wait a minute!" Terranova protested. "If you're implying—"

"I'm not implying anything," the deputy sheriff interrupted. "But I am a cop, and there's no way I'll help cover up murder. So your hands better be clean."

"They're clean," Terranova assured him. "I don't know any more about that drowning than you do."

"I hope not," Flynn told him. "I'll be in touch."

The deputy hung up. Hanging up also, Terranova

took out a handkerchief and wiped his brow. There was a rap on the door, and Jock Koslo came in without waiting for an invitation to enter.

"Got the translation," the big man said, laying the envelope addressed to George Anderson on the hotel director's desk.

Terranova discovered that there were now four sheets in the envelope: two typewritten ones in addition to the two in braille. He read the typed translation. It began:

Dear Dad:

I have finished the manuscript I previously wrote you about, and it's really going to blow the lid off things around here. It's a good thing I took precautions to hide the script, because I think my apartment was searched last night.

Remember where I used to hide my money when I was in college? Well, that's where I have the manuscript. It's all packaged and addressed to the publisher, so all I have to do is have it weighed and meter stamped at the post office. I don't want to mail it from Seacliffe, because I have a feeling I'm under observation, and I wouldn't put it past these people even to rob the mails to prevent exposure. I plan to drive over to Riser tomorrow and mail it from there.

The rest of the letter was of no interest to Terranova, because it went on to other activities not concerned with the manuscript. Refolding the sheets, he locked them in a desk drawer, but handed the envelope addressed to the dead girl's father back to Koslo.

"You'll need this address," he said. "Get down there and ask George Anderson where his daughter used to hide her money in college. If necessary, ask him in such a way he'll be glad to answer."

The big man took out his mistometer and sprayed both nostrils before asking, "When?"

"Tonight. Flynn just phoned that Sabrina Duncan, that female lawyer who's been nosing around, plans to

drive down there in the morning. I want you there first."

"Maybe I better have some help."

"Of course," Terranova said a trifle irritably. "Take Spencer."

Koslo thoughtfully sprayed his nostrils again. "What about the Duncan woman? Won't she yell cop when she gets there in the morning?"

After considering this, Terranova said, "Maybe we can snow her out of it." Lifting the phone, he dialed the switchboard and said, "Get me the riding stables across the street."

The number rang several times before a male voice finally answered, "Fitzgerald Riding Stables."

"The boss still around?" Terranova asked.

"Out in the stables. Hang on."

After a few minutes wait, another male voice said, "Fitzgerald speaking."

"This is Paul, Augie. You're going to have to run down to Oceanside with Jock tonight."

"Sorry, Paul, but I've got a mare due to foal. That's why I'm still here so late."

"Let the vet handle it."

"I want to be here too, Paul. It's—"

"This has to do with the deal," Terranova interrupted in a harsh voice. "If you don't want to carry your share, we'll cut you out. So far you've been a free rider. Now it's time to do your bit."

After a lengthy silence, Fitzgerald asked in a subdued voice, "What do you want me to do?"

"Come on over when you're ready to go, and I'll explain it to you."

"All right, Paul. Soon as I clean up a little."

As Terranova hung up the phone, the door opened again and an attractive woman in her thirties stepped into the office. Chic and elegantly groomed, she wore an evening gown that exposed smooth white shoulders and a good deal of bosom.

"I've been waiting in the dining room," she said. "I got tired of it."

"Sorry, Elizabeth," Terranova said, rising to his

feet. "Something came up, but I'm all through now." He turned to Koslo. "When Augie Fitzgerald gets here, send him to the dining room."

Then he took his wife's arm to escort her out.

About six P.M. Kelly Garrett, now wearing a flowered dress, looked into the coffee shop. When she spotted Jill Munroe, dressed in a skirt and sweater, at the end of the side counter, she went over to seat herself at a table for two against the wall only a few feet from Jill. Glancing her way, Jill smiled the sort of smile you give people you barely know. Kelly returned the same sort of smile.

Jill was already eating. When Kelly had ordered and the waitress had moved off, Kelly asked in a low voice, without looking at Jill, "Anything so far?"

Jill said, "Found out Terranova has a wife much younger than he is. Learned he's giving a cocktail party for the staff and guests in the cocktail lounge tomorrow from four until six. Period." After pausing to butter a roll, she asked, "You?"

"Zilch. That second name Bosley mentioned—William Dignam—none of the guests I've asked ever heard of him."

Jill said, "I'll inquire among the employees tomorrow."

"Any ideas?"

"One. Terranova ought to have a personnel file. The personnel office won't be open at night. And you're a lock expert."

"Hmm," Kelly said. "Where's the office?"

"Just to the left of the registration desk."

"Oh, fine. Right under the eyes of the desk clerk, the switchboard operator, and probably the hotel dick."

"It must have windows," Jill said. "Why don't you meet me at my room after it gets dark?"

"About nine?"

"That's a nice time," Jill agreed.

"What's your room number?"

"Twenty-two, right off the kitchen."

The waitress brought Kelly's dinner then, and they had no more conversation. Jill finished eating, signed her check and left.

It was just nine when Kelly located room 22 in the first-floor rear hall where the service employees lived. When she knocked, Jill let her into a nine-by-twelve room with nothing in it but a bed, a dresser and two straight-backed chairs.

Looking around, Kelly said, "Kind of austere, isn't it? My room is sumptuous." She went over to glance into the bathroom. "No tub, just a shower stall."

"Actually it's the governor's suite," Jill said. "While Jerry Brown is governor, anyway."

Kelly grinned. "Moonshadows doesn't exactly go overboard for its employees, does it?"

"For some. It was that girlish desk clerk. I've discovered the male tennis pro has a regular room, but he shoved me back here with the cooks and busboys."

"Why don't you kick?"

Jill shrugged. "At least it's clean. Why make waves? Got your burglar tools with you?"

"Naturally."

"Then let's get moving."

They left the room, and Jill led the way along the hall to the side door that gave onto the parking lot. They moved along the side of the building until Jill halted beneath two windows that had venetial blinds on the inside. The sills of the windows were just about at eye level.

Jill said in a tone of surprise, "Somebody left a window open."

Kelly looked where Jill was looking. The window on the left was open from the bottom.

Kelly glanced around the parking lot. No one was in sight. She said, "Give me a hand up."

Jill laced her fingers together to make a stirrup of her two hands, then bent down until her knuckles were only about a foot from the ground. Kelly put her left foot on Jill's clasped palms, and gripped the window sill with both hands. Jill straightened to hoist her up until she was seated on the windowsill.

Kelly lifted her legs and swiveled around to set them on the floor inside, pushing the lowered venetian blind out of the way. Sliding herself to one side of the blind, she found the cord to raise it, then leaned out the window to give Jill a hand and pull her upward and inside.

When Jill was also inside, Kelly lowered the blind again so that they couldn't be seen from the parking lot, then drew a pencil flashlight from her purse and switched it on.

Kelly shined the narrow beam about the room to disclose several desks, some tables with office machines and equipment on them, and a row of filing cabinets against a side wall. One of the drawers of the filing cabinet farthest away from them, at the far left end of the row, stood wide open.

Going over to the open drawer with Jill trailing behind her, Kelly shined the light onto the tab in the slot on the front of the door. It read Personnel Records R to Z.

"They even left the right drawer open," Kelly said in a pleased voice.

She shined the light at a downward angle into the open drawer. The beam also shined alongside the drawer onto the floor, illuminating a large male foot.

Eight

Kelly stood perfectly still for a moment, her heart slowly rising to her throat. Jill, standing to her right, was unaware of the foot. Because the man standing alongside the filing cabinet made neither movement nor sound, Kelly came to the conclusion that he didn't know she was aware of his presence.

Forcing her voice to remain calm, Kelly said, "Guess this isn't what we're looking for after all. Let's look over here."

She swung the beam in the direction of the desk nearest the door, took the surprised Jill by the elbow and steered her that way.

"That was the right drawer," Jill protested, trying to hold back.

Adrenaline gave Kelly the strength to force Jill onward. Between her teeth she murmured, "We've got company."

"What?" Jill said without understanding.

They were almost to the door when there was the sound of scurrying feet behind them. Kelly's first panicky thought was that they were scurrying in their direction. She shoved Jill forward and made a grab for the doorknob, meaning to push Jill out into the lobby, run after her, and slam the door behind them. But it didn't work that way.

As she might have expected, the door was locked. By the time she realized the footsteps were going away from them instead of toward them, the venetian blind had been jerked aside and the intruder had vaulted through the window to the ground.

Kelly swung the beam of the pencil flashlight at the window too late to catch a glimpse of the man. And she was too unnerved to think of running over to the window to look out after him.

Jill's quavering voice came from the darkness alongside of her. "What was that?"

Kelly released her breath. "The guy who left the window open for us so conveniently. It was open because there was a burglar ahead of us."

"We better get out of here," Jill said nervously.

"Why?" Kelly inquired, now beginning to calm down. "That burglar isn't going to yell cop. We may as well get what we came for."

Guiding the way with the narrow light beam, she returned to the open file drawer. "He was interested in the same drawer we were," she said. "Think it's possible he was looking for the same thing?"

"I don't know," Jill said. "But let's find it and split."

Locating a file folder labeled "Terranova, Paul," she pulled it out. There was nothing in it except a personnel card full of data. Kelly started to take the mini-camera from her purse, then decided there would be too long a wait before she could get the film developed, and they needed the information on the card right now. Instead she flashed the light beam over desks until she spotted a scratch pad and a pencil. Handing them to Jill, she focused the light on the personnel form while Jill copied off the pertinent information.

When she replaced the file, Kelly checked to see if there was also one for Mrs. Terranova. There wasn't. She checked the drawer containing personnel records for employees with names from A to Q, but no William Dignam was listed.

"Guess neither Terranova's wife nor Dignam are employees," she said.

"We've got enough," Jill said. "Let's get out of here."

They peeked out to make sure no one in the parking lot was watching, before dropping to the ground outside. Kelly, who exited last, pulled the window closed behind her.

Back in Jill's room, they looked over the information Jill had copied from the hotel director's personnel card. It wasn't much. His birth date was listed as April 28, 1929, and his place of birth was New York City. His education was high school only. He was listed as married, and his wife's name was shown as Elizabeth. Her vocation was given as housewife. He had been director of Moonshadows for seven years, but the section devoted to previous employment was blank.

"Something odd here," Jill said, puzzled. "How do you step into a job like his with only a high school education, no special training, and no previous experience?"

"Maybe he owns a piece of Moonshadows," Kelly hazarded.

"Could be," Jill agreed. "Think we ought to pass this on to Bosley?"

Kelly shrugged. "I don't think it's going to excite him, but at least it will prove we're working. Not from your room phone, though. It goes through the switchboard."

"We're too far away to use our CB radios," Jill said. "I'll go phone him from one of the public booths in the lobby."

"That seems smarter," Kelly agreed. "I'll wait here. The less we're seen togther, the better."

Jill was gone only about ten minues. When she returned, she said, "Only thing turned him on was Terranova's social security number. He thinks that with Charlie's pull, he can find out everything there is to know about the man from the Social Security Commission. Or at least everything in his social security file. Bosley's going to call me back in the morning to let me know what Charlie turned up."

"He ask you if we'd located Dignam yet?"

"Uh-huh. When I said no, he just said to keep plugging. Kelly, you think that man in the personnel office tonight could have been the mysterious Mr. Dignam?"

"How would I know?" Kelly inquired. "All we know about the man is that Brooke Anderson mentioned him in a letter to her father. He may not even have anything to do with the matter we're investigating."

"In any event he'll keep until morning," Jill said. "Maybe we ought to get some sleep so we can get an early start."

"I can take a hint," Kelly said, heading for the door. "See you in the morning."

At nine in the morning Jill appeared at the tennis courts attired in white shorts, a tee shirt, and tennis shoes, and carrying her racket. Only one of the three courts was occupied. Two men were volleying back and forth. Both were about forty, one slightly plump

and a bit out of shape, the other lean, well muscled, and handsome.

The lean man won the exchange with a strong forehand shot just as Jill got there. That seemed to be game, because the two men met at the net to shake hands.

The plump man, sweat running down his face, said to his cool, unruffled opponent, "Enough for me, Dale. Thanks for the workout."

"Sure," the lean man said.

As the plump man moved off, Jill asked, "You Dale Parker?"

"Right," he said pleasantly.

"I'm Jill Munroe, the fill-in instructor."

"Oh, yeah, I've been expecting you." He looked her up and down appreciatively. "The front office said you've been working Vegas."

"Yes, Caesar's. Before that the Hilton, before that a couple of dude ranches in Arizona."

"Why sign on here for such a short gig?"

Jill shrugged. "The money's good, and I've got a couple of weeks to spare. How long have you been the pro here?"

"Too long," he said wryly. "With your experience as a pro, I guess you know the rules?"

"Oh, sure. I play up to the dirty old men, you flirt with the dirty old women."

"Something like that," he said smiling. "Of course there are guests who simply want tennis partners, and even a few who actually want instruction." After a pause, he added, "There's one rule here for all employees, not just the tennis pros."

"What?"

"People here don't like a lot of questions. The less questions you ask, the better off you'll be."

Before she could inquire as to what he meant by this cryptic warning, a feminine voice behind them asked, "Am I interrupting something?"

They turned to see an attractive, well-built woman in her early thirties, dressed in a chic tennis outfit

and carrying a racket. She was examining Jill with barely concealed jealousy.

Dale Parker said, "Oh, hello, Liz. Jill, this is Elizabeth Terranova, the boss's wife. Jill Munroe, Liz, the fill-in for Lora."

"Oh," Elizabeth said, the jealousy in her eyes fading as she realized Jill wasn't a starry-eyed guest trying to make time with the handsome tennis pro. "Nice to have you with us, Jill."

"Nice to be here, Mrs. Terranova."

"Call me Elizabeth, please. Or Liz, if you prefer." She turned to Parker. "All ready for my lesson."

"Sure." He said to Jill, "The hours are loose here. Supposed to be nine to noon and two to five, but you don't have to hang around the courts if they're deserted. Should check periodically with Manny in the tennis shop, though, to see if he's scheduled you any matches or instruction sessions."

"All right," Jill said.

He looked her up and down again. "With your looks, you shouldn't have any problem putting smiles on the faces of the dirty old men who come down here to, quote, straighten out their backhands, unquote."

That put the jealous look back in Elizabeth Terranova's eyes. She said with a touch of impatience, "This dirty old lady needs her backhand straightened out too, Dale."

"Don't push," he said amiably.

Taking her elbow, he steered her over to the far court, where he put an arm about her shoulders demonstrating how to hold her racket for a backhand smash. Leaning back against his chest, she looked up into his face with a smile of open invitation.

Dale Parker was playing with fire, Jill thought. A good way for a tennis pro to lose his job was to give regular "lessons" to the boss's spouse. But perhaps it was one of those marriages where each partner went a separate way.

Nine

For the second time in the last few minutes Jill was startled by someone behind her suddenly speaking. This time it was a male voice.

"Excuse me, my dear."

Turning, she found a patently dirty old man leering at her. In his mid-fifties, slightly stout, he wore shorts and a tee shirt and tennis shoes, and carried an expensive racket. He had a round, cheerful face that made his leer more comic than lecherous, as though he meant it only as a put-on. Despite his expression, she found herself instantly liking him.

"Yes?" she inquired.

"You are one of the pros, aren't you?"

"In person," she said with a grin. "And you'd like to straighten out your backhand, right?"

His leer turned into a wide smile. "You must be a mind reader, girl. Name's Harvey." He flashed a huge ring on his right hand with Harvey on it in diamonds. "Harvey Sunday. From Phoenix. I'm in ladies' lingerie. Sunday's Undies, we call 'em. Now, we could hit a few, or we could discuss my game over a gin fizz at the bar. Either way, I'm a big tipper."

Cocking an eyebrow at him, Jill said with amiable good humor, "I'll bet with that golden personality of yours, Harvey, you know everything that goes on around here."

"Knew you'd be here, didn't I?"

Jill grinned at him, and he grinned back. Taking her arm, he led her toward the outside door of the cocktail lounge.

"Now let me tell you about the new line I'm manu-

facturing," he said. "It's a killer. I call 'em Harvey's Candy Panties. They're edible."

Jill burst out laughing.

In the cocktail lounge Harvey Sunday ordered a gin fizz, but Jill had no desire for anything alcoholic that early in the morning. She had a cup of coffee. They were still seated at their table twenty minutes later when Kelly Garrette entered the lounge. She was wearing shorts, a halter and tennis shoes, but carried no racket. Spotting Jill, she came over to the table.

"Morning," she said to Jill. "Does the hotel rent tennis rackets?"

Harvey Sunday rose to his feet. Jill said, "In the tennis shop. This is Harvey Sunday, Miss—ah—" Jill paused apologetically. "I'm afraid I've forgotten your name."

Amused by Jill's rather unnecessary acting, since no one except the stout man was within hearing distance, Kelly said, "Garrett. Kelly Garrett. But I asked you to call me Kelly. How are you, Mr. Sunday? Please be seated."

"Little horny," Sunday confided, remaining standing. "Buy you a drink?"

Like Jill, Kelly found the man more comic than lecherous. Grinning at him, she said, "At nine thirty in the morning?"

"It quells my passions."

"Mine aren't that high this early," Kelly told him. She looked at Jill. "Are you available for a tennis lesson?"

Smiling, Jill said, "Believe it or not, I'm giving one right now."

"She's straightening out my backhand," Sunday explained.

"I see," Kelly said with an understanding nod. "Did you hear from your friend yet, Jill?"

Jill shook her head. "Not yet."

"Well, I'll catch you for a lesson later. Meantime I think I'll see what kind of massage the resident

flesh pounder gives." That was to let Jill know where to find her when she was free.

"The Viking maiden?" Sunday asked. "You'll come out feeling wonderful, except for the broken bones."

Laughing, Kelly moved on. Sunday resumed his seat.

"Now, dear, let's get on with our tennis lesson," he said, taking Jill's hand.

At the massage room Kelly discovered there were two people ahead of her, and there would be about a forty-five-minute wait. Because Jill might come looking for her, she decided to sit in the waiting room and read a magazine instead of making an appointment and coming back.

Kelly was the only one left in the waiting room when Inga stuck out her head and motioned her into the massage room. Jill still hadn't showed up. Inside the middle-aged fat woman who had been just ahead of Kelly lay belly down on a table, a towel across her hips, looking exhausted.

Pointing to the door of a dressing room, Inga said, "Undress."

As she stripped, Kelly could hear the smack of Inga's palms on flesh, and the grunts and groans of the fat woman. There was a stack of towels on a table in the dressing room. Wrapping her nude figure in one, *Kelly returned to the massage room.*

Inga paused in her pounding long enough to point to a second massage table about three feet from the first and say to Kelly, "There."

Kelly reclined on the table facedown. The masseuse continued to knead and pound her fat victim for a few more moments, then gave her a smart crack on the butt and said, "Enough."

The woman gratefully climbed from the table and waddled into the dressing room. Inga moved over to Kelly, who braced herself for the onslaught.

But to her surprise the woman's big hands were remarkably gentle, at least in the beginning. Kelly

relaxed as they expertly kneaded her back and shoulder muscles.

She was almost drifting off to sleep when she heard the fat woman say, "Good-bye, Inga. Same time tomorrow?"

"Ya," Inga confirmed without interrupting her kneading.

Kelly roused herself with the thought that she was supposed to be working. She had not a great deal of hope of getting information from the taciturn masseuse, but it was worth a try.

She said, "A friend who stayed here met a man named William Dignam, and asked me to deliver her regards if I happened to run into him. Ever hear of him?"

"The man who gave you his seat yesterday."

"The doctor?" Kelly said in surprise.

"The doctor," Inga confirmed.

After considering this, Kelly decided the best way to have a private converastion with the man would be as a patient. She said, "I'm feeling a bit run down. Maybe he could give me a B-twelve shot. Is his office in town?"

"No."

"Oh, is he the hotel doctor?"

"He is not a medical doctor," Inga said.

That stopped Kelly cold. She was afraid if she asked more questions about Dignam, Inga might begin to wonder why she knew so little about the man, when the friend who asked her to look him up must have told her *something*.

Switching to the next important subject, Kelly said, "I really find Mr. Terranova very attractive. He turns me on. Have you known him long?"

She realized that question was a mistake when the amazon suddenly began to bruise her back with rapid chops with the edges of her palms. Inga growled, "You should relax more and talk less."

Kelly was literally saved by the bell when there was a ding signaling that someone had entered the waiting room. The masseuse went over to stick her

head out the door and invite the new customer in. Kelly heard whoever it was go into the dressing room, but didn't turn around to look.

Inga resumed her pounding. After a time Inga paused long enough to point to the other table and say, "There."

Kelly glanced sideways to see Jill, wrapped in a towel, lie facedown on the other table. Inga continued to beat her back and legs until Kelly was again saved by a bell, this time a phone on the wall. Kelly let out a sigh of relief as the big woman went to answer it.

"Inga here," she said into the phone.

After a pause, she said, "Yes, sir, I'll be right there."

Hanging up, she said to Kelly and Jill, "Be back quick. Don't go." She left the room.

Kelly sat up and felt her back with a pained expression on her face.

"Hope I didn't interrupt anything," Jill said. "Did you two want to be alone?"

"Cute, Jill," Kelly said sourly. "I feel like the roller derby was just run on my spine. And any minute I thought she was going to start singing *Strangers in the Night*. Guess I shouldn't have remarked that I found Paul Terranova attractive."

"Uh-oh," Jill said. "Horny Harvey says she follows him around like a dog. If he reciprocates, it doesn't show in public."

"I found our William Dignam," Kelly said. "He's a doctor, but not an MD. What he's a doctor of, I don't know."

"I do. Horny Harvey was a fountain of information. He's a doctor of geology. Lives here at the hotel."

"You did well with your dirty old man," Kelly said approvingly. "Anything else?"

Jill shook her head. "I'm getting strange vibes from old Harvey. One minute he's coming on like a silver-tongued devil whose main objective is to get my clothes off, the next minute he's questioning me as hard

as I'm questioning him. But he did have a line on who was doing what to whom around here.'"

"Did he know Brooke Anderson?"

"He kind of avoided a direct yes or no on that. Switched the subject back to Sunday's Undies."

"Sunday's Undies?" Kelly repeated with raised brows.

"His business. Manufactures ladies' underwear in Phoenix. Got a new line coming out he calls Harvey's Candy Panties. They're edible."

"You're kidding. Are you sure this guy's for real?"

Grinning, Jill said, "He even showed me some samples. I politely declined his offer to taste one. He's kind of cute, in a fatherly sort of way. We have a date for a set of tennis this afternoon."

"Yeah? Well, watch out for his racket. Did you hear from Bosley yet?"

Jill nodded. "Main reason I'm here. Couple of really strange things turned up. Charlie phoned contacts at both the Social Security Commission and the I.R.S. The records date back to the late sixties. Before that there's no trace of Terranova's existence."

"That is strange," Kelly said. "But you said a couple of things turned up."

"Uh-huh. The second one even stranger. Charlie decided to check out Terranova's wife too. Her existence begins the same date as his. And the social security numbers of Terranova and his wife are *consecutive.*"

Kelly stared at her for several seconds before saying, "Impossible. Social security numbers are assigned as applications come in. Terranova's pushing fifty. You said his wife is several years younger."

"What I told Bosley. He said there was one way they could have gotten consecutive numbers legally, and Charlie is checking that out. Didn't tell me what, but he did say they both have to have false identities."

Kelly nodded thoughtfully. "And Terranova shut me off when I tried to snap a few photos."

"Camera shy?" Jill asked.

Kelly nodded again. "Maybe his false identity is the reason. I'd like to get into his private office and take a look at his files."

"Tonight between four and six would be a good time. Remember I told you there's a cocktail party for the staff and guests? Terranova will be busy there. We'll have to make a point of getting back in time for the party."

"Getting back?" Kelly said. "Where we going?"

"Bosley wants us to head down to Oceanside to back up Sabrina in case she needs it. She's running down there to visit George Anderson, and Charlie's kind of worried."

"About what?"

"Charlie's been trying to phone Anderson since last night, and he doesn't get any answer."

Inga reentered the room and went into the dressing room. Kelly said in a whispered groan, "Oh, no, I don't think my body can take any more."

"Don't be silly," Jill whispered back. "It could be the beginning of a very meaningful relationship."

Giving her a murderous look, Kelly turned back onto her stomach as the masseuse came from the dressing room and moved toward her.

Ten

Sabrina was driving a company car, which was equipped with a mobile phone. As she left her motel to drive to Oceanside, she called John Bosley to report that she was on her way.

"I don't know what you're going to find down there," Bosley said. "Charlie's worried. He's been try-

ing to phone George Anderson since last night, and gets no answer."

"Maybe he's away," Sabrina suggested.

"Possible, but Charlie says he's away very seldom. Being blind, he requires company to go very far from home, you know. And it's strange he didn't let us know where to reach him, in case we had news about the investigation."

"Well, we'll know soon," Sabrina said. "It's only about an hour and a half drive."

"Let me know if he's all right soon as you find out," Bosley instructed.

"Will do," Sabrina told him, and hung up.

She took the Pacific Coast Highway as far south as it ran, because it was more scenic than the San Diego Freeway, even though you had to slow down going through towns. At Dana Point, where the Pacific Coast Highway ran out, she continued on the San Diego Freeway for the last twenty-five miles.

George Anderson's home was a modest one-story building on the beach, set back from the water only about fifty yards. The rear of the house faced the ocean. Sabrina parked on the gravel road in front and pushed a doorbell.

After waiting a few moments, it occurred to her that she had heard no bell ring inside. Pressing her ear to the door, she pushed the button again. She still could hear no ring. She knocked on the door, at first lightly, then harder when no one answered.

Trying the doorknob, she found the door locked. She glanced around, wondering if she should inquire of a neighbor, but there was none close by. The cottages on each side were fifty yards off, and across the road was a boat yard.

She decided to go around back and try the rear door.

There was a back porch, and seated on the steps was a stocky man in his mid-fifties wearing dark glasses and smoking a pipe. He had a round, pleasant face, graying hair, and was dressed in denim trousers, a blue turtleneck sweater and a sea captain's hat.

The sand beach extended clear up to the back porch, and Sabrina's feet had made no sound in the sand. When she halted right in front of him, he continued to puff his pipe contemplatively and to gaze past her at the ocean.

"Mr. Anderson?" she asked.

His head jerked toward her in startlement.

"Sorry if I sneaked up on you," she said contritely.

"My fault," he said. "Thought I heard somebody at the front door, but was too lazy to go see. Bell doesn't work, and I'm too lazy to fix it either." He extended his right hand. "George Anderson."

Clasping the hand, she said, "Sabrina Duncan, Mr. Anderson. Charlie Townsend asked me to stop by to see you."

He nodded. "Good old Charlie. I appreciate that."

"He's been worried about you. He's been trying to reach you by phone since last night."

"Old friend from my sailing days stopped by, and drove me to his home in San Diego. Just brought me back about an hour ago."

"Oh," Sabrina said. "That explains that. We're doing everything we can to investigate your daughter's death, and I know it's a difficult time for you, but I was hoping you could help me by answering a few questions."

At mention of the dead girl, his face assumed a saddened expression. "I'm not sure I can be of any help. I'm still in kind of a state of shock over what happened." He got to his feet and stepped down onto the sand. "But why don't we take a walk, and I'll try to tell you whatever I can?"

"Of course. Do you want to take my arm?"

"Thanks, but I know this beach like the palm of my hand."

He strolled in the direction of the water, and Sabrina fell in at his side. The tide was going out, and was about three-quarters of the way to low tide. Below the high-tide mark the sand had been swept clean by the ocean, but above it were a couple of large boulders and a large piece of driftwood that looked as though

it had been half-embedded in the sand for years. The stocky man avoided them just as though he could see.

When they reached the hard-packed sand below the high-tide mark, he turned south to stroll along the water's edge. Apparently he could tell by the sound of the surf just how far they were from the water, because he maintained a precise ten-foot distance.

In a contemplative voice he said, "I guess my blindness has forced me to be philosophical about fate, where we're going, life in general—" He let it drift off, then said more heavily, "Brooke's passing left a hole in my life that's never going to be filled. But if it was God's will, then there's not a blessed thing any of us can do about it."

They walked on in silence for a few moments, Sabrina not wanting to intrude on his pain with questions about the case. Soon he stopped, drew on his pipe and said, "Blamed thing went out."

Sabrina drew a cigarette lighter from her purse. At the same moment he took a lighter from his pocket.

"Never mind," he said. "This is one of those with a jet flame for pipe smokers."

He relighted his pipe and puffed enjoyably.

Sabrina said, "Mr. Anderson, Brooke mentioned in her first letter to you that there would be another letter following."

He nodded. "The second letter never arrived."

"Her first letter—it was typed in braille?"

"Yes. Why?"

"I would like to go over it. Maybe you could read it to me. There might be something in it that you've missed and that could be of help to us."

"Nothing more than you already know," he said. "And I don't have the letter any more. It accidentally got mixed in with some trash and was incinerated." Then he turned his face toward her. "How did you know Brooke's letter was typed in braille?" he asked curiously.

"I saw the braille typewriter in her apartment."

"You were in her apartment?"

"On a hunch. To see if there might be anything

there that would point to something more than an accidental death."

"Did you find anything?"

"The apartment had been ransacked."

He looked startled. "Burglary?"

"I think it was someone looking for the manuscript on Moonshadows."

After thoughtfully puffing his pipe for a moment, he started back the way they had come. Again Sabrina fell in at his side.

"The rest of your investigation," he said. "Can you tell me anything more?"

"We don't have much yet, but we have investigators working on it. They're examining the Terranova possibility, and trying to locate Brooke's informant at Moonshadows. As soon as we know something definite, I'm sure Charlie will call you."

They walked on in silence to the point where they had first come down to the water's edge. There he paused to turn his face toward the ocean.

Emitting a sigh, he said, "I come down here every morning at dawn. To start my day. When I stand here and listen to the sound of the surf rolling in, it's like a communication with the sea."

He continued to face the ocean for a long moment, then abruptly turned and headed back toward the house. Sabrina had to hurry to keep up with him. When they neared the back porch, he slowed, and when they came to within a yard of it, he halted. He moved cautiously the rest of the way, reaching out an exploratory toe with each step until his foot touched the bottom step of the porch. Then, oriented, he turned to face Sabrina.

"I want to find out what happened to Brooke, Miss Duncan," he said. "I need to know what happened to her."

"We'll do our best," she assured him. "I wish we could have met under happier circumstances, because I enjoyed the walk."

"So did I," he said, smiling at her. "I always enjoy the company of a pretty girl." He paused to turn his

smile into a grin. "And you sound pretty to me. Are you?"

"How could I tell you that without sounding conceited?" she asked.

"You've answered it," he said. "You are pretty. Come see me again, Miss Duncan, under happier circumstances."

"All right," she agreed. "We'll take another walk. Good-bye, Mr. Anderson."

She walked back around the house to her car.

The man in the dark glasses mounted the steps and went in the back door. The kitchen was a shambles. Pots and pans had been swept from cupboards, dishes lay broken on the floor, even the contents of the refrigerator had been dumped out. He knockd the ashes from his pipe out onto the floor and continued on into the front room.

That room too had been thoroughly ransacked. A thin, hook-nosed man of about forty was leaning against one side of the doorway into a bedroom. A larger man had the curtains slightly parted in order to watch Sabrina get into her car and drive away. The larger man was Jock Koslo.

When the girl had driven off, Koslo dropped the curtains back in place and turned around.

"Okay, Fitzgerald," he said to the man in dark glasses. "Did she buy the hearts-and-flowers routine?"

Removing the dark glasses, Augie Fitzgerald stuck them in a hip pocket of his denims. With a smug smile he said, "Koslo, you have so little faith. I was voted best male supporting actor of the Seacliffe Little Theater Group three years running."

"We'll put you up for an Academy Award," Koslo growled. "You sure she bought it?"

"I guarantee she left here believing I was George Anderson. But I think we'd better head Miss Sherlock Holmes off at the pass."

"Why? How much does she know?"

"The manuscript, braille, Terranova, Moonshadows. I thought she was a lawyer for the Anderson girl's

publisher, interested only in locating the manuscript."

"What Flynn told Terranova."

"Well, she's really working for somebody named Charlie Townsend, who in turn seems to have been hired by George Anderson."

That brought on an attack of asthma. When he had brought it under control with his mistometer, Koslo said, "Jesus Christ! Charlie Townsend is an LA private detective. One of the best in the business." He turned to the hook-nosed man. "Spencer, catch her."

Straightening up, Spencer asked, "You want her bruised up a little, or permanently damaged?"

Koslo said flatly, "I want her dead."

Nodding understanding, the hook-nosed man unlocked the front door and hurried out. Koslo walked into the bedroom. Fitzgerald trailed after him.

This room was as much a shambles as the rest of the house. On the bed lay a man of about Fitzgerald's age, but taller and heavier. He too wore denims and a turtleneck sweater. He was unconscious and breathing heavily.

"What's this?" Koslo demanded. "I leave you guys alone for ten minutes and he's out cold. What'd you do to him?"

"He started to give us some trouble. We had to chloroform him."

Koslo grunted. "Did you scare any more out of him than you had when I left to move the panel truck?"

Fitzgerald shook his head. "Nothing. He's a gritty old buzzard."

Koslo took some car keys from his pocket and handed them to the other man. "Panel truck's parked on the south side of the boat yard, where Spencer left his car. Bring it around and we'll get him out of here."

Nodding, Fitzgerald accepted the keys and left the room.

Eleven

As she drove back onto the freeway, heading north, Sabrina lifted the mobile phone to call John Bosley.

When he answered, she said, "I talked to George Anderson, Bosley. You can tell Charlie to stop worrying. He's fine. An old sailing mate picked him up yesterday to take him to his home in San Diego. He spent the night."

"Good," Bosley said. "Charlie will be relieved. Get anything from Anderson?"

"Not a thing. He accidentally destroyed that first letter from his daughter."

Bosley said, "Well, if you spot Kelly's Cobra on the way back, honk it down. I can't call her, because she doesn't have a mobile phone."

"Why's she heading this way?" Sabrina asked.

"She and Jill are both on their way there. I sent them to back you up. With our client not answering his phone, I was worried about what you might run into."

"Thoughtful of you, Bosley. If they're already beyond Dana Point, I'll probably miss them, because there are places where you can't even see the other side of the freeway. I could catch them on the Pacific Coast Highway, though, if they took that route. Did they?"

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"You're not as helpful as you are thoughtful, Bosley," Sabrina said, and hung up.

Five miles north of Oceanside Sabrina glimpsed a blue Ford sedan coming up fast behind her Nova.

She was driving in the left-hand lane at slightly over the fifty-five mile per hour speed limit. Flicking on her turn signal, she moved over to let the Ford pass.

From the corner of her vision she was conscious of the driver peering at her as the Ford swept by. Glancing that way, she caught a glimpse of a thin, hook-nosed face. The predatory expression on the face startled her. Wondering if he was a cruising rapist looking for a victim, she automatically memorized his license number before he pulled ahead.

When the blue Ford took the next off-ramp, she decided she had an overactive imagination.

Five miles farther on a blue Ford appeared in her rearview mirror, coming up fast. But this time it slowed to her speed when it got to within fifty yards of her, and maintained that interval. That was too far to make out the license number, but near enough for her to see the driver's face in the rearview mirror. It was the same man who had passed her before.

She realized he had passed her to make sure he was following the right person, had taken the next off-ramp to let her get ahead again, then had immediately driven back on the freeway. He was no cruising rapist looking for just any lone woman, she decided. He had been looking for her specifically, which meant it probably had to do with her visit to George Anderson.

Lifting the phone, she again called Bosley. "What now?" he asked.

"I've picked up a tail. Blue Ford sedan, California license four-two-six, Ocean-Baker-Zebra."

"You sure it's a tail?" Bosley asked.

"I'm sure. Rat-faced driver about forty. He passed me to make sure he had the right person, took the next off-ramp, then pulled back on the freeway behind me."

"Okay. I'll run a DMV check and call you back."

Sabrina hung up. The blue Ford remained the same distance behind her all the way to the off-ramp to the Pacific Coast Highway, and for some miles beyond that. Sabrina divided her attention between the rear-

view mirror and approaching traffic, hoping to spot Kelly's Cobra.

The road now became hilly and curved, with a sheer cliff face to the right and an equally sheer drop-off on the left down to the rocky shore of the ocean. Portions of the Pacific Coast Highway were divided road, although there was no grassy median between the northbound and southbound lanes, as there was on the freeway. Along here it had three lanes, marked so that the two-lane portion was usually upgrade. There was little traffic because the San Diego Freeway was a much faster route.

On an upgrade curve to the left, where the northbound traffic had two lanes, the blue Ford suddenly began closing the distance. As it drew near, Sabrina could see the expression of the driver's face, and realized with shock that he meant to wreck her. She had done enough stock car racing to recognize the killer look of a driver who intended deliberately to take another car out of the race for the benefit of a secret partner among the other drivers. The face in the rear-view mirror had that killer look: flared nostrils and a frozen, merciless grin.

The Nova she was driving was an eight-cylinder job, which had the same body as the six, but a 350-horsepower engine. She floored the accelerator, the two extra barrels of the four-barreled carberator opened, and the Nova suddenly went from fifty-five to sixty on an upgrade where most cars would have had trouble maintaining the same speed. The Ford had already been going sixty, however, so the interval of about ten yards remained the same.

At the top of the grade the road leveled out, although it was still curvy, and northbound traffic still had the double lane. Sabrina increased her speed to sixty-five, but when the Ford sped up even more, and began to gain on her, she decided to play the other driver's game. She pulled over to let him pass.

From her dirt track experience she knew that the man's intention was to rap her front fender lightly with his rear one as he cut in front of her, sending the

Nova into a nosedive off the right side of the road into the rocky face of the cliff only a few feet beyond the shoulder. She didn't give him the opportunity. As he drew abreast, she drifted over to hit him broadside, rear fender against rear fender, front fender against front fender.

He bounced away, momentarily ran over the solid yellow line, driving a car coming the other way onto the shoulder to avoid head-on collision, then swung back and accelerated abreast of her again. But this time, as she started to swing the Nova into him again, he simultaneously swung into it. There was a loud crunch as the two cars smashed together, then bounced apart again. Both fought their steering wheels for control, and both managed to steady their cars.

It had been close for both, though, and particularly for Sabrina. The Nova had swung clear to the edge of the road shoulder, which at this point came within inches of the cliff face.

Up ahead was a sharp curve to the left, which was going to give the Ford the advantage of centrifugal force. The Ford driver obviously decided to wait for that advantage, because he stayed alongside the Nova without again attempting to sideswipe it.

The phone rang.

Grabbing it, Sabrina said, "Not now, Bosley!" and dropped it on the seat alongside of her. Then she snapped open her purse, grabbed her .32 caliber snub-nosed detective special, and transferred it to her left hand.

As they neared the curve, just as the Ford began to drift over to sideswipe her again, her left arm went out the window, she aimed the gun at a downward angle and blew out the Ford's right front tire.

Instantly she drew in her arm, flipped the gun onto the seat, gripped the wheel with both hands and floored the brake pedal.

Rubber screeched as the Nova went into a long forward skid that eventually brought it to a halt just short of the curve. The Ford had shot on ahead. The driver attempted to maneuver the curve, but the blown

tire made it impossible. The Ford ran off over the shoulder, skidded along the rocky face of the cliff to the screech of torn metal, caromed off the cliff across the road, crashed through the wooden guard rail and tumbled end over end down the fifty-foot bank to burst into flames on the rocks at the water's edge.

Bosley's voice was yelling from the receiver on the seat beside her, "Sabrina! Sabrina!"

Sabrina picked up the phone and put it to her ear. Before she could speak, Bosley said, "Sabrina, are you there?"

She said in a slightly quavering voice, "In a manner of speaking, Bosley."

"What was all that noise?"

"A car wreck just ahead of me."

"Oh. Serious?"

"Rather."

He waited, but when she didn't elaborate, he said, "The car that's been tailing you. It's leased. Registered to Moonshadows, Incorporated."

"I rather suspected it might be," Sabrina said. "That was the car in the wreck. It just tried to fold mine up like a beer can." She tried the door and discovered it was jammed shut. "Nearly succeeded. I can't get the door open."

In a high voice he said, "You mean you cracked up another company car! That's the second one this month!"

Sabrina said sardonically, "I appreciate your concern for my well-being, Bosley. I'm just fine, thank you." She looked over at the smoke rising from the burning car, which wasn't within her range of vision. "But they're going to have to pick the other guy up with a broom."

After a period of silence, Bosley asked, "Why do you think he tried to wreck you?"

"Obviously because I visited George Anderson." She paused before going on thoughtfully, "You know, I was never inside his house. He was sitting on the back steps when I got there, and we walked on the beach while we talked."

"What are you getting at?"

"A car registered to Moonshadows following me from there, and trying to kill me, indicates I was under observation while I was there. Suppose they were inside, with a rifle trained on George Anderson so that he wouldn't give them away?"

"Did he seem nervous?" Bosley asked.

After reflection Sabrina said, "No. And we were far enough from the house so that he could have warned me if something was wrong without them ever knowing it. There has to be some other explanation."

"Such as?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," Sabrina said. "But I'm going back there to make sure he's all right. Will you report the accident to the highway patrol for me?"

"All right," Bosley agreed. "Just where are you?"

"On the Pacific Coast Highway, somewhere between Laguna Beach and Newport Beach. The car went through a guard rail down onto the rocks next to the ocean."

"Okay, I'll phone it in," Bosley said. "Let me know what you find at Anderson's place. And Sabrina—"

"Yes?"

"I think it's time I took a personal interest in this investigation. I don't quite like the way it's going."

"What kind of personal interest, Bosley?"

"I'm going to Seacliffe."

She emitted an amused laugh. "Under your favorite cover?"

"If you mean as a designer, you know that's my least favorite cover. Let's reverse it this time. You be the designer."

"All right," she said. "You going to register at Moonshadows, or you want me to get you a room at my motel?"

"May as well beard the lion," Bosley said. "I'll check in at Moonshadows."

"Contact me at the motel when you get settled," Sabrina said.

Hanging up the phone, she restarted the engine, *pulled off the shoulder and drove on until she found*

a place where she could turn around. She headed back for Oceanside.

When she passed the place where the guard rail was broken, a couple of cars had stopped, and several people were standing on the edge of the drop-off, staring down at the smoking wreckage of the blue Ford.

Twelve

Back at Oceanside, Sabrina left her car on a side street north of George Anderson's house, then walked along the beach to approach the house from the rear. Cautiously mounting the back steps, she listened at the back door for some indication of life inside, but could hear nothing. Taking out her gun, she quietly turned the doorknob, found the door unlocked, and opened it. It creaked slightly, causing her to tense and level her gun at the door into the living room. When no one appeared, she pushed the door closed behind her.

In view of the attempt on her life, she was not overly surprised at the torn-apart condition of the kitchen. After a cursory glance around, she moved on into the front room, her gun thrust out before her. It was equally torn apart. The only sound in the house was the loud ticking of a grandfather clock in one corner.

To her right was the open door into a bedroom. By now she was convinced that the house was empty, but she still held her gun ready as she moved to the bedroom door. Like the rest of the house, the room was empty and disheveled. After peering into the bathroom, she put away her gun.

A sharp, tantalizingly familiar odor drew Sabrina over to the bed. A crumpled cloth lay on one of the

pillows. Picking it up, she sniffed at it. It took her a few moments to identify the odor, but then it hit her. It was chloroform.

The creak of the kitchen door opening alerted her. Jerking her gun from her purse, she flattened herself against the wall next to the door, then inched toward the door, her gun ready, the chloroform-soaked cloth still clutched in her left hand.

Whispering voices came from the rear of the house, too low for Sabrina to make out any words. Then footsteps moved from the kitchen into the front room. Sabrina bounced into the doorway like a leaping cat, her gun leveled.

"Hold it right there!" she commanded.

Facing her were Kelly and Jill, their guns leveled at her. The three girls simultaneously breathed sighs of relief and lowered their guns.

"Why didn't you say it was you?" Sabrina asked a bit angrily.

"How did we know it was you?" Jill countered. "We looked for your car outside, but it wasn't there."

"I parked it on the next street," Sabrina said, gesturing north with her gun.

"I parked mine on the next street that way," Kelly said, pointing south.

All three put away their guns. Jill's nose crinkled. "What's that smell?" she asked.

Sabrina, who had forgotten she was still clutching the cloth, tossed it onto a table. "Chloroform."

"Anderson?" Kelly asked.

"He was here less than an hour ago," Sabrina said. "It looks like somebody took him by force."

Glancing around, Kelly said, "And took time for a search before they left."

"Has to be," Sabrina said. "They couldn't find the manuscript, so they took Anderson. I don't quite understand why they tried to kill me, though."

"Tried to kill *you?*" Jill asked, wide-eyed.

"Somebody followed me from here and tried to run me off the road. I did the running instead. I called Bosley on my mobile phone and had him check the

would-be killer's license number. The car was leased to Moonshadows."

"The driver dead?" Kelly asked.

"That would be my guess. He went over a fifty-foot cliff and the car burned up. Have you two nailed down anything yet?"

"We found our William Dignam. He's a doctor of geology. Also the county planning commissioner. Also very cozy with Paul Terranova."

"Who is really not Paul Terranova," Jill said.

Sabrina gave her a peculiar look. "Come again?"

"We talked to Bosley by phone just before we left for here. We already knew Terranova and his wife were living under fake identities, because their Social Security and income tax records go back only seven years. Plus they have consecutive Social Security numbers. Now Charlie's contacts in Washington have confirmed there is no Paul Terranova. His birth certificate, schooling, service record—all phonies."

"Then who is he?" Sabrina asked in puzzlement.

Kelly said, "Gerald Gallenti. Indicted seven years ago for fencing millions in stolen securities. He turned state's evidence against some Syndicate friends rather than take the heat himself."

"And get this," Jill put in. "After a little plastic surgery, he and his wife were given new identities and new starts in life as part of the Justice Department's Witness Relocation Program."

"Lovely," Sabrina said with disdain. "Our government helps a crook start over. One hundred percent rehabilitation. Terranova uses a clean slate to set himself up in some new scam at Moonshadows."

"The question is, what scam?" Kelly said.

Sabrina said, "If he's thick with the county planning commissioner, it could be he's figured some way to turn an illegal profit on some county development."

Jill looked startled. "Hey, I picked up a casually dropped bit of information from Horny Harvey that didn't mean anything to me at the time."

"Horny Harvey?" Sabrina said with raised brows.

"Jill's middle-aged boyfriend," Kelly explained. "What was the information, Jill?"

"A new Seacliffe Bay marina complex is in the planning stage."

"It can't be that," Sabrina said. "The only remaining coastline in that county is protected by law six-two-eight-seven-four."

The other two girls looked at her in amazement. Jill said, "A walking encyclopedia."

"An attorney-at-law is supposed to know things like that," Sabrina said modestly.

Kelly said, "You certainly throw yourself into your parts. But maybe there's some loopholes in law six-two-eight-seven-four. And if the county planning commissioner is in Terranova's pocket—"

After a thoughtful pause, Sabrina said, "He has the local fuzz in his pocket. Deputy Sheriff Al Flynn was about as subtle as a riveter. If he can buy one official, why not two? The marina angle is worth looking into."

Jill looked at her watch. "Hey, I have a two P.M. date with Horny Harvey, and the cocktail party starts at four."

"What cocktail party?" Sabrina asked.

"Terranova's giving a cocktail party for both guests and employees from four to six. All drinks in the cocktail lounge will be free."

"Maybe I'll come," Sabrina said. "Bosley is going to register at Moonshadows today. We're going to do the fashion designer-model cover."

"How can you do that?" Kelly asked. "Everybody thinks you're a lawyer."

"Nobody at Moonshadows has seen me," Sabrina said. "Deputy Flynn is the only one who could give me away, and I doubt that he'll be there."

Jill said, "I thought Bosley hated playing the swishy designer bit."

Sabrina grinned. "He does. This time I'm the designer and he's the model."

Both the other girls grinned at this information. Then Jill said to Kelly, "We'd better get moving."

"I'll follow you back," Sabrina said. "At least as far as my motel."

They got back to Seacliffe far enough in advance of Jill's 2:00 P.M. tennis date with Harvey Sunday to stop for lunch in one of the village cafes. After lunch they split up, Sabrina returning to her motel and the other two girls going on to Moonshadows.

By the time Jill and Kelly reached Moonshadows, it was ten minutes of two. Jill hurried to her room to change into tennis clothes while Kelly wandered into the hotel lobby.

John Bosley, impeccably dressed in green slacks and a gray checkered sport coat, was just coming in the front door, followed by a bellman pushing a luggage rack containing three suitcases. His gaze briefly touched Kelly without any sign of recognition. She moved over to a magazine rack near the registration desk so that she could hear Bosley's conversation with the desk clerk.

Beaming at the clerk, Bosley said, "John Bosley. I phoned to make a reservation earlier today."

"Oh yes, Mr. Bosley," the clerk said.

He gave Bosley a registration card to fill out. When Bosley had completed it, the clerk gave it a cursory glance, then studied it more closely when he seemed to spot something of interest to him on it.

Looking up, he said, "Bosley, Incorporated, Designers. I assume that's clothing design."

Bosley's round face beamed again. "Yes indeed. We're relatively new in the field, but already have a solid following. I take it from your question that you're unfamiliar with us."

"Yes," the clerk admitted. "But I'm quite interested in dress design. Would it be possible while you're here for me to show you some drawings? Everyone who's seen them thinks they are absolutely stunning gowns."

"Gowns?" Bosley said. "Bosley, Incorporated designs only men's clothing."

"Oh," the clerk said, disappointed. "You don't do any designing for women at all?"

"I don't do any for either sex," Bosley told him. "The Bosley of Bosley, Incorporated is my daughter. She's the designer. I work for her."

The clerk hiked delicately formed eyebrows. "I see. What is your capacity in the firm, Mr. Bosley?"

"I'm a model."

The clerk stared at him for a moment, then handed a key to the bellman. "Have a pleasant stay, Mr. Bosley. There is a cocktail party in the lounge today for employees and guests. Four to six. You're welcome to attend."

"How nice," Bosley said. "My daughter will be along before that. She's neither a hotel guest nor employee, but may I bring her?"

"Of course."

Giving him another beam, Bosley moved on to the elevator, followed by the bellman pushing the luggage rack.

When the bellman had left Bosley's room, undertipped, Bosley phoned Sabrina at her motel.

"How'd things go down there?" he asked her.

"Not too good. I tried to reach you on the mobile phone, but just got the tape-recorded message. Are you at Moonshadows?"

"Yes."

"Phoning from your room?"

"Yes."

"Then you're talking through a switchboard. Have one of the other girls tell you about it. They should both be back there by now."

"Yes, I saw one in the lobby. There's a cocktail party here at four."

"I heard about it."

"I explained to the registration clerk that my daughter, who is also my employer, would be meeting me here. He kindly invited both of us to the party."

"How nice," Sabrina said. "Just tell them I'm Miss Bosley?"

"If anyone asks," Bosley said. "My feeling is the guests won't be questioned."

"Did you mention my first name?"

"I think I did," Bosley said. "I believe I said Cordalia Bosley."

"You're so sweet," Sabrina said. "See you around four, daddy."

Thirteen

It was just two P.M. when Jill got to the tennis courts, dressed for tennis and carrying her racket. Two of the courts were occupied. A young couple in their twenties were using one. On the other Dale Parker was hitting easy lobs to a slim, well-formed but overpainted woman of about fifty who giggled every time she managed to make a return.

Standing on the sidelines, glowering at the handsome tennis instructor and his aging partner, was Elizabeth Terranova. She too wore a tennis outfit and carried a racket. She was lightly and impatiently slapping the calf of her legs with the strings.

There was no sign of Harry Sunday.

Stopping next to the hotel director's wife, Jill said, "Afternoon, Elizabeth."

The woman gave her a vague smile, then immediately returned her attention to Dale Parker.

"We could lob a few until my partner turns up," Jill offered.

Elizabeth looked at her as though questioning her sanity. "I'll wait for Dale, thanks," she said in a tone that really meant the game held no interest for her unless her opponent was a man.

Shrugging, Jill made no further attempts at conversation.

When Sunday hadn't appeared by 2:10, Jill wandered over to the outside door into the cocktail

lounge and peered in to see if he might be there. The only customer at the bar was a graying, dignified-looking man of about fifty. There was a sprinkling of customers at tables, but it took a few moments for Jill's eyes to adjust from the outside sunlight to the dimly lit interior of the lounge before she could make out any of the faces. Then she spotted Kelly seated at a table against the wall, sipping something frothy and orange. She started that way, then made out Harvey Sunday at a corner table, his back to the corner, with what looked like a gin fizz before him.

The stout man hadn't simply failed to notice the time; he was wearing a well-tailored, light green leisure suit that clearly was not intended for playing tennis.

Changing direction, Jill went over to Sunday's table. She halted before him, blocking his view of the bar, with her left hand on her hip and the handle of her tennis racket aimed at him like a gun.

"Any last words?" she inquired.

"Oh, hi, kid," he said without much enthusiasm. He shifted position to peer around her at the man seated at the bar.

Lowering the racket, Jill said plaintively, "Harvey, I'm mad at you. That's the first time I've been stood up since I took my braces off in junior high."

"Sorry, kid. Couldn't make my lesson. Something else came up."

Rising to his feet, he dropped a couple of bills on the table, his gaze still on the man at the bar. Jill turned to see what was so interesting about the lone bar customer. He was in the act of signing his drink tab, presumably getting ready to leave. Jill turned back to regard Harvey critically.

"Was it something I said?" she asked.

"Nothing personal, girl. I'll give you a jingle later."

He moved on past her. She turned to look after him, and saw him drop coins in a cigarette machine near the outside exit. He was watching the man at the bar from the corner of his eye, and making a rather poor attempt to cover it up by pretending to have

difficulty deciding which brand of cigarettes he wanted.

Jill walked over to Kelly's table. "Who's the man just leaving the bar?" she asked.

"That's our Dr. William Dignam," Kelly said. "Your friend Harvey can't seem to keep his eyes off him. I think he's planning to tail him."

Dignam was heading rather unsteadily for the door. Harvey Sunday suddenly made up his mind which brand of cigarettes he wanted, pulled the lever and scooped the package out of the trough. He followed Dignam out.

Kelly said, "That intrigues me so much, I think I'll make it a parade."

Getting up, she too dropped a couple of bills on the table and moved after the two men.

Jill went over to the bar. The signed drink tab still lay there, because the bartender was busy mixing drinks for one of the tables. Four drinks were cash-register totaled, which accounted for the good doctor's unsteadiness. A handwritten tip had been added on, then the signature: *Dr. William Dignam, Room 320.*

Jill also exited by the door leading outside. Kelly was just disappearing around the corner to the parking lot. Jill walked that way and paused at the corner to watch Dr. Dignam drive off the lot in a white sedan with a county sticker on its door. Harvey Sunday followed in a Mercedes-Benz, and Kelly followed him in her Cobra.

Jill continued along the side of the building to the side door leading into the lobby, went to her room, tossed her racket on the bed, took a thin steel picklock from her purse, and left the room again. She took the elevator to the third floor, located room 320, and tried the picklock on the door lock.

She had never been as proficient with locks as either Kelly or Sabrina. After about five minutes she decided to take a rest. She was getting ready to resume when a plump, middle-aged maid pushed her cart containing towels and linens and cleaning equipment around a corner fifty feet away. Jill turned the

other way, took an elevator back down to the lobby, and returned to her room.

After thinking for a time, she got an idea. Leaving the room again, she went the few feet along the hallway to the hotel kitchen. As she had expected, there was an emergency first-aid kit on the wall. No one paid any attention as she opened the kit and took out a roll of quarter-inch surgical tape. She ripped off about three inches, pasted it to her left palm, and returned the roll to the cabinet.

She went back to her room long enough to get her tennis racket off the bed and a five-dollar bill from her purse, then hurried back to the elevators and took one to the third floor again.

The maid's cart was in front of a room only about twenty-five feet from room 320, and just as Jill approached, the maid herself emerged. Jill made a show of trying the door, then turned to the maid, who had been examining her sharply, and put an expression of relief on her face.

"Gee, am I glad to see you," she said. "I was supposed to leave this tennis racket in 320 for Dr. Dignam, but I've missed him and I'm locked out. If you could open the door for me so I can leave the racket inside, I'd really appreciate it."

"Can't do that," the maid said, shaking her head. "You'll have to see the hotel director."

"I don't want to go inside," Jill explained. "I just want to leave the racket."

"Rules are rules, ma'am."

Jill showed her the five-dollar bill. "Then maybe you could just stick the racket in the room for me," she suggested persuasively. "That wouldn't be breaking any rule, would it?"

Her gaze fixed on the bill, the woman said, "Guess it wouldn't, at that."

Jill extended the bill, the maid took it and tucked it inside her smock into her brassiere. Jill trailed after her as she went up the hall to 320, knocked, then used her passkey to open the door. After pushing it

open, she turned to Jill and held out her hand for the racket.

Handing it to her, Jill said, "If you put it on the bed, he'll see it as soon as he comes into the room."

The maid arched an eyebrow, not seeing the necessity for such precise directions, but obeyed without making any reply. As soon as she moved into the room, Jill quietly stepped in after her long enough to strip the surgical tape from her palm and tape the latch open so that it could not catch when the door was closed again. She was back out in the hallway before the maid turned around.

As the maid came from the room, Jill gave her a friendly smile and said, "Thanks. You're a lifesaver."

She started toward the elevators. The maid pulled the door closed from outside and returned to her cart. Jill pushed the elevator button, then watched as the maid knocked at a door, waited a moment, then used her passkey to open it and disappeared inside.

Quickly, her tennis shoes making no sound, Jill returned to 320, pushed inside, stripped the tape from the latch, and closed the door. Squeezing the tape into a small ball, she dropped it into a wastebasket next to the dresser.

The tennis racket rested in the center of an unmade double bed with a lamp table on each side. A large dresser and a wall mirror were against the right wall. Two loose-leaf books about a quarter-inch thick and an attaché case lay on the dresser.

Jill examined the books first. On the cover of one was printed *County Minimum Standards for Class A Residential Zones.* The other was titled *Seacliffe Isles Marina Complex.*

Jill riffled through the latter. It was full of blueprints and specification sheets, both too complicated for Jill to make much sense out of without detailed study. She abandoned the book in favor of the attaché case.

The case was locked, but the lock was much more simple than the door lock. Jill went to work on it with

her picklock, her tongue curling out of the corner of her mouth as she probed.

"Bingo!" she said in surprised delight as the lock suddenly popped open.

Opening the case, she drew out its contents. There was a small leather card case for business cards and about a dozen large photographs mounted on cardboard. She studied the photographs first.

One was an aerial photograph of an ocean bay with a ship docking pier protruding out into it like a long finger. Buildings of various sizes ringed the shore. Jill, of course, could see only the roofs of the buildings, so it was impossible to determine what they were, but she assumed the larger ones were warehouses. The photograph had a glassine overlay, and large portions of the bay were cross-hatched in red grease pencil. At the bottom of the photograph was a small label on which was typed SEACLIFFE BAY AND MAINLAND.

Jill looked at the next photograph. It was a closer aerial view of the bay and also had a glassine overlay marked with red grease pencil. The cross-hatching here was over the heart of the bay, and reached almost to the channel markers. This was labeled "Proposed Dredging Area, Seacliffe Bay."

The next photograph was not glassine covered. It was of a tabletop miniature of a marina development, taken from above and at an angle. It was labeled "Seacliffe Isles Marina."

The rest of the photographs were close-ups of various portions of the tabletop miniature, also taken from above and to one side. These bore such labels as "Marina Rental Slips," "Restaurant Concession Area," "Recreational Area," and "Parking Lots."

Jill slipped the photographs back into the attaché case and examined the card case. It contained only about a dozen business cards reading, *"Dr. William Dignam, County Planning Commissioner, Room 207, County Courthouse, Riser, Calif., Phone 555-3124."*

Jill returned the card case to the attaché case and

was in the act of relocking it when a rap came at the door.

It was the maid coming to clean the room, she instantly realized. She knew there would be at least a few moments before the woman used her passkey. Trying not to hurry, she continued to ply the picklock.

Just as the attaché case lock clicked shut, she heard the passkey slip into the door lock. Jill took two catlike steps to flatten herself against the wall alongside the door. The door opened, shielding her from the maid's view as the woman entered, headed straight for the bathroom, and disappeared inside.

Jill tiptoed to the bed, scooped up her racket, and scooted out the door. As she pushed the elevator button, she wondered what the maid would think when she found the tennis racket no longer lying on the bed.

Jill doubted that she would report the incident either to her supervisor or to Dr. Dignam, since she would also have to confess to having violated a rule.

Fourteen

The white sedan with the county marker on its door took the Pacific Coast Highway about four miles north, then took a paved road west for three blocks. That brought it to within a block of the dock area at Seacliffe Bay. Dignam turned right and drove parallel to the dock for a little over a block. Then he turned left into an alley between two warehouses, followed it to the dock, turned right along the rear of the second warehouse, right again into a driveway running along the north side of the warehouse, and braked in front of a truck entrance into the building.

Over the door of the truck entrance was a long

wooden sign reading Warehouse 1, Berth 23. On the closed sliding door was another large sign reading No Trespassing. Violators Will Be Prosecuted.

When Dignam beeped his horn, the sliding door opened. He drove inside, and the man who had opened the door slid it closed again and locked it.

Harvey Sunday tailed the county car at a distance of fifty yards in his Mercedes-Benz while they were on the highway. When Dignam took the road leading toward the dock, Sunday risked shortening the distance to twenty-five yards. The stout man figured it wasn't a great risk, because with the number of drinks the doctor had consumed, it was a wonder he could drive, let alone spot a tail.

When Dignam turned right on the street running parallel to the dock, Sunday risked shortening the interval even more. But when the county car turned left again into the alley between the two warehouses, he decided to park a quarter block away and continue on foot. He figured the county car would be parked somewhere in the area, because if it drove very far beyond the two warehouses, it would fall off the end of the dock.

He walked to the alley the county car had turned into and peered down it. When he failed to spot the white sedan, he walked through the alley to the dock. He glanced both ways along the dock, but the white sedan was nowhere in sight. The only car nearby was a Cobra parked just beyond the warehouse to his left, and no one was in it.

Puzzled, he walked north along the rear of the warehouse and peered around the corner on that side. There was still no sign of the county car. He retraced his steps, crossed the alley, and walked south along the rear of the other warehouse to its southwest corner. He looked around the corner with equal results.

The Cobra was parked only about ten feet from this point. He contemplated it for a moment, vaguely recalling spotting a similar car in his rearview mirror on the highway, but not giving it much thought because the parked car was empty.

There was a driveway running alongside the south side of this warehouse. Sunday took it back to his car. He came to the conclusion that Dignam, despite his heavy drinking, had spotted him and taken evasive action to shake him. He guessed that the man had simply doubled back around one of the warehouses while he was following on foot.

He made a tour of the dock area, driving up and down streets and alleys, but still failed to spot the county car. Just when he had decided to give up, he unexpectedly spotted the white county car emerging from the truck entrance of the northernmost warehouse.

Sunday pulled over to the curb and waited. The car turned right along the driveway, away from the dock, and the sliding door closed behind it. At the front of the building it turned right again.

Harvey Sunday weighed whether to follow the white sedan or investigate the building it had emerged from. Deciding that Dignam was probably merely returning to the hotel, he opted for the warehouse.

He turned into the driveway and drove past the truck entrance from which Dignam's car had emerged, noting the sign over the door lettered Warehouse 1, Berth 23, and the no-trespassing notice. He made a complete circuit of the building, finally parking across the street from it.

He got out and crossed the street. The front of the building contained a single door, off of a small porch at the top of three wooden steps. Presumably the door led into the warehouse office, although there was no sign to that effect. Over the door was a sign saying the same thing as the one over the truck entrance around on the north side, and on the door was printed another no-trespassing notice.

Aside from a single window alongside the door, the front of the building was blank wall. A blind was drawn over the window.

Mounting the three steps, the stout man tried the door and found it locked. He considered knocking, then decided a surreptitious examination of the inter-

ior when no one was around would be wiser. Someone was there now, he knew, because the sliding door of the truck entrance had been closed from the inside. He would have at least checked out the office, if he had had his burglar tools with him, but they were back at the hotel. During the cocktail party late that afternoon would be a good time to return, he decided. Terranova and Dignam were certain to be at it. At worst, he might run into some minor lackey of the conspirators in the warehouse.

Sunday recrossed the street, got into his car and returned to the hotel. Shortly before he turned into the drive leading to the hotel parking lot, he again noticed in his rearview mirror a Cobra of the same color as the one that had been parked at the dock. When it didn't turn into the driveway behind him, however, he decided he was being overly imaginative.

Kelly had followed too far behind the Mercedes-Benz to make out where the white county car was going after it turned off the highway. It was not even in sight when she turned onto the road leading down to the bay after the Mercedes-Benz. When Sunday turned right, she assumed the white sedan had turned that way ahead of him.

She reached the corner and started to turn, but changed her mind when she saw the Mercedes-Benz parking a half-block away. Instead she drove on across the intersection to the dock and parked just south of a driveway running alongside a large warehouse. Beyond it an alley divided it from another, equally large warehouse.

A tall wooden fence on Kelly's side of the driveway, enclosing a boat storage yard, blocked her view of the street a block east until she had gotten out of the Cobra and had walked to where she could see along the driveway. Then she saw the nose of the parked Mercedes-Benz sticking out a block away, parked in almost the identical spot on that street as the Cobra was on the dock. There was no sign of Harvey Sunday, however.

She walked to the alley between the two warehouses and peered down it. The stout man was walking up the alley toward her. He didn't spot her, because he was running his gaze over the sides of the two buildings.

Kelly made a rapid retreat to her car, climbed back behind the wheel and waited for him to appear. When he did, she dropped sideways onto the seat so that the car would appear empty. After waiting a few moments, she cautiously raised her head. The stout man was no longer in sight. She remained on one elbow, ready to drop flat again, for perhaps a minute. She was on the verge of pushing herself fully erect when Sunday reappeared from the far side of the warehouse beyond the alley, and headed her way.

She dropped flat again. After a time she heard his footsteps approaching. When they halted only a few feet in front of the car and there was no sound for a few moments, she concluded he had spotted her, resigned herself to a confrontation, and began mentally searching for some cute explanation he might accept for her being there.

She had decided on, "I'm following you because I'm trying to take you away from that blonde tennis instructor," when the footsteps resumed, now going away from her along the driveway between the warehouse and her car.

Cautiously she raised up on her elbow again. The stout man's back was to her, and he was just disappearing at the point where the wooden fence cut off her vision of the driveway.

Kelly sat erect, started the car, and drove forward just far enough to see up the driveway. She saw Sunday cross the street at its far end, and a moment later the Mercedes-Benz drove away.

She drove forward too, saw the Mercedes-Benz pass the alley, then pass the driveway alongside the second warehouse. She continued along on the dock, parallel to his route.

As she reached the next side street, the Mercedes-Benz turned her way. She went on across the inter-

section and watched in the rearview mirror as the car turned right behind her. She continued on across the next street, watching the car behind her in the rearview mirror. It turned right at that intersection.

Kelly made a U-turn and gunned the Cobra back that way. She reached the street the Mercedes-Benz had turned up just in time to spot it making a left turn onto the street it had originally been on. When she reached that corner, it was turning left again.

Kelly realized that Sunday was driving up one street and down another, looking for Dr. Dignam's car. She also realized that if she continued to try to tail the erratically moving Mercedes-Benz, she was bound to be spotted.

She returned to the road leading from the highway to the dock and parked on a side street two blocks east of the dock, facing the road. After about twenty minutes the white county car went past with Dr. Dignam alone in it. Another five minutes passed, then Harvey Sunday went by in the Mercedes-Benz.

Kelly let him get a fifty-yard lead, then followed. When he reached the highway, Sunday turned south. She followed him back to the hotel, pulled over on the shoulder to park for a few minutes so that he wouldn't see her pull in behind him, then drove on in.

The white county sedan was back on the lot too, she noticed as she parked.

Inside the hotel Kelly went over to the desk, took a sheet of hotel stationery and an envelope from a supply kept there for the convenience of guests, and carried them over to a stand-up writing desk. Folding the blank sheet of paper, she sealed it in the envelope, wrote John Bosley on the outside, then carried it over to the registration clerk.

Handing it to him, she said, "Will you see that Mr. Bosley gets this, please."

"Certainly," he said.

After checking a room chart, he stuck the envelope into the mail and key slot for room 437. Mentally filing the number, Kelly headed for the elevators.

Bosley answered her knock at the door of 437, gave her a beaming smile and invited her in.

When he had closed the door behind her, Kelly said, "Don't let the blank sheet of paper in the envelope at the desk addressed to you throw you. It was just a ruse to get your room number without making a big thing of it."

"Oh, that's too bad," he said. "I love to get mail."

"Heard from the other two girls?" Kelly asked, taking a seat in an easy chair.

"I talked to Sabrina on the phone at her motel. She'll be at the cocktail party. Haven't been in contact with Jill."

"She's in room 22, just off the kitchen. She's been pumping a guest named Harvey Sunday for information on what goes on around here, but old Horny Harvey seems to have depths we hadn't fathomed."

"Horny Harvey!" Bosley said, appalled. "What kind of name is that?"

"Just an inside joke between me and Jill. Anyway, about forty-five minutes ago Harvey tailed our friend Dr. William Dignam from the hotel to Seacliffe Bay."

"*Dr.* William Dignam?"

Kelly asked in surprise, "Didn't Jill tell you we'd located him when she phoned you just before we left for Oceanside this morning?"

Bosley nodded. "She told me he was county planning commissioner and seemed to be thick with Paul Terranova, but she didn't say he was a doctor."

"Probably because he's a doctor of geology, not an MD," Kelly explained. "Anyway, when Harvey tailed Dignam, I tailed him. The parade led to Seacliffe Bay. Why Dignam went there, I don't know, because Harvey lost him. But Jill, Sabrina and I are pretty well agreed that Dignam's and Terranova's coziness has something to do with a Seacliffe Bay marina complex that's in the planning stage."

"Interesting," Bosley said. "But what do you think this—ah—Harvey gentleman's interest is in Dignam?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," Kelly said.

Bosley glanced at his watch. "It's ten after three, and

the cocktail party starts at four. Perhaps something will develop there."

"One thing will," Kelly told him. "I'm going to take advantage of Terranova's preoccupation with his guests to snap a few pictures of the files in his office, if I can find anything interesting in them." She got to her feet. "Meantime I'd better go start getting pretty for the party."

"You're always pretty, Kelly," Bosley said gallantly.

"Why, Bosley," she said, dimpling, "you're becoming more human by the day."

Fifteen

In the hotel director's suite Paul Terranova was checking his appearance in the full-length mirror on the bedroom wall when his wife came in from the bathroom. Terranova wore white flannel slacks, white shoes and a dark blue sport coat with brass buttons. Elizabeth had on a flowered caftan and wore a rose in her hair.

Looking him up and down with pursed lips, she said, "You look nice."

He glanced at her. "Thanks."

She looked slightly hurt that he had failed to return the compliment. "Are we going to talk?" she asked.

Checking his wristwatch, he said, "It's a quarter to four."

"You said we'd have time to talk before the party."

"We would have if you hadn't taken so damned long to get dressed."

"You just finished yourself," she protested. "Paul, we have to talk. Let's leave this place before it's too late."

He stared at her as though she were mentally deranged. "The sun must be getting to you, kid. I'm on top of the biggest deal I've ever put together, and you want to leave."

"You know what I'm talking about, Paul. The biggest deal in the world means nothing if you're dead. And if that Anderson girl found us, other people can."

Irritated, he tapped his face with a forefinger. "Take a good look at me, Elizabeth. Do I look like the guy they're after? New nose, new face. They can't hit what they can't see."

"Brooke Anderson saw right through that new nose and new face," she said quietly.

Frowning at her, he said, "Look, we made a pact. *La dolce vita.* You play all you want with whoever you feel like playing with, but stay out of my way when it comes to business. *Capisce?*"

"That's the way you want it?" she asked in a hurt voice. "The way you really want it?"

"Oh, come on, Elizabeth," he said in a bored voice. "Your neglected wife act doesn't ring any truer here than it does on the tennis court."

Stiffening, she said, "What's that supposed to mean?"

"Everybody in the hotel knows about you and Dale Parker."

After a period of silence, she said, "And about you and Inga Svensen. There wouldn't be any Dale Parkers if I got any attention from you, Paul."

"We have a party to go to," he said, taking her arm and steering her into the front room of the suite.

In the cocktail lounge all the tables had been pushed against the walls and the chairs had been removed from the room, because there would be room only for standing when the crowd gathered. A buffet had been laid out, and there were three bartenders on duty.

By 4:15 a considerable crowd of varyingly dressed men and women had gathered. Kelly, in a white pantsuit, had been cornered immediately by two men. Jill had been grabbed by Harvey Sunday when she appeared in shorts and a halter, then left for a moment while Sunday got them drinks at the bar. Paul

Terranova stood near the buffet, talking to a group of guests that included Dr. William Dignam. His wife was at the bar with Dale Parker.

Sunday returned from the bar with a gin fizz in one hand and a screwdriver in the other. Handing the screwdriver to Jill, he said, "Here you are, kid. Some party, eh?"

"A ball," she agreed. "Harvey, I'm still waiting for you to explain why you stood me up."

"Now, honey, you know I wouldn't have stood you up if I could have avoided it."

"Is that supposed to be an explanation?"

Grinning at her, he said, "Guess it'll have to do until I think up a better one."

She grinned back. "Harvey, you're impossible."

His gaze jumped to someone behind her, and suddenly his whole demeanor changed. Hurriedly setting his drink on a nearby table, he said, "Just thought of something I forgot to do, kid. I'll see you later."

He started to angle away toward the door leading outside, but was blocked by a group of people standing in a circle. Jill turned to see who had spooked him. To her amazement she saw John Bosley approaching with a beaming smile on his face. Her amazement wasn't at his smile, but at his attire. He wore a tuxedo with brown shoes.

"Hey, Harold," Bosley called, moving right past Jill after Harvey Sunday.

The man gave no sign of hearing. He started to edge his way around the circle of people blocking his way to the side door. Catching up with him, Bosley dropped a hand on his shoulder.

"Hey, Harold," he repeated.

Turning to regard him coldly, Sunday said, "I'm afraid you've mistaken me for someone else, sir."

He continued to edge around the group, leaving Bosley gaping after him. When he finally disappeared through the side door, Bosley shrugged and returned to Jill. After nodding a greeting to her, he stood forlornly gazing down at his brown shoes.

"Did you ever feel like the world was a tuxedo and

you were a pair of brown shoes?" he asked. "How could my wife do this to me? How could she pack *brown* shoes with a tuxedo?"

Amused, Jill said, "Bosley, the party isn't formal. You're the only one here in a tux."

Bosley gazed around the room perplexed. "I thought all cocktail parties were formal."

"We all nurture a few false beliefs, I suppose, Bosley. The man you just greeted as Harold. Why did you think you knew him?"

"Do know him. Harold Stephens. He's a Senate investigator. Fellow cut me cold."

"Senate investigator?" Jill said, frowning. "Are you sure it was he?"

"Positive. Charlie and I worked with him about a year ago on a fraud case. Why?"

"He's registered here as Harvey Sunday."

"Harvey Sunday. That man was Horny—" He halted in embarrassment.

"You must have been talking to Kelly," Jill said with amusement.

"Yes. Hor—I mean Sunday tailed Dignam to Seacliffe Bay a little while ago. Kelly doesn't know what Dignam went there for, because Sunday lost him."

"If he's a Senate investigator, his interest in Dignam is beginning to make sense," Jill said. "I managed to get into Dignam's room this afternoon. There was a loose-leaf book on his dresser with blueprints and specification sheets in it for the Seacliffe Isles Marina Complex. Also a briefcase full of photographs of Seacliffe Bay and a tabletop miniature of the proposed complex. A couple of aerial photographs of the bay had glassine overlays with grease-pencil markings on them, but I don't know what the markings meant."

"Interesting," Bosley said. "It's beginning to look more and more as though the matter Brooke Anderson was investigating concerned the marina complex." He gazed around the room and spotted Kelly. "There's Kelly. She mentioned she plans to try to get a look at the files in Terranova's office during the party."

Looking that way also, Jill said, "Yes. She wants

me to corner Terranova while she's looking. Where's Sabrina?"

"Just fashionably late, I suppose. She takes even longer to get ready than you do."

In a lecturing tone Jill said, "Now Bosley, I've explained that to you before. It's not the dressing time, it's the bath time. I always take a long time in the bathtub, because a bath always makes me very logical."

Bosley hiked an eyebrow at the logic of that, gazed at her wonderingly for a moment, then decided not to pursue the matter.

"Maybe you'd better go to work on Terranova," he said. "I'll circulate among the guests to see what I can pick up in the way of rumor."

Bosley moved off. Jill went over to where Terranova was conversing with two couples. Moving in next to him, she snuggled against his arm and looked up at him. He gave her a rather startled but appreciative smile.

"Pardon me for interrupting, Mr. Terranova," Jill purred. "But I just wanted to thank you again for hiring me. I'm enjoying the job tremendously."

Smiling, he said, "They told me we suddenly were booked solid for tennis lessons. I can understand why."

"Well, thank you." She gave him a particularly inviting smile. "I was hoping that while I was here we might be able to play together." Her tone suggested that she wasn't necessarily referring to tennis.

He glanced at her nearly empty glass. "You need a refill. And I haven't even had a drink yet." Turning to the two couples, he said, "Will you excuse me while I take care of a poor thirsty employee's needs?"

All four of the people smiled understandingly. Terranova and Jill moved toward the bar, Jill clinging to his arm.

"We can discuss my stroke," Terranova said.

"You're the boss," Jill said softly.

One of the men talking to Kelly asked her if she would like another drink. Kelly had been giving the two men only half her attention, the other half being on Jill's performance. But as soon as she saw the

blonde girl moving toward the bar with Terranova, she returned her full attention to her companions.

"Please," she said, handing her glass to the one who had asked.

As he moved off, Kelly said to the other man, "Excuse me a minute. Powder room. Save my place, huh?"

"I'll guard it with my life," he assured her.

Kelly moved off and exited into the lobby.

Sixteen

By now there were so many guests at the cocktail party that the crowd had spilled over into the lobby. Kelly drifted over to the door to the left of the registration desk. The only hotel employee who had the door within his range of vision was the effeminate registration clerk, because his desk blocked the view from the cashier's cage, and the bell captain's desk was beyond the cashier's cage. Kelly was partially screened even from him by the overflow crowd.

Nevertheless she waited until he was busy registering a guest before taking a picklock from her pocket. She inserted it into the lock of Terranova's private office door, gave it a quick twist, and the latch clicked open. After glancing toward the registration desk to make sure the clerk wasn't looking her way, she pushed open the door and slipped inside.

Looking back, she saw a couple of men gazing her way with admiring expressions on their faces, but neither face showed any suspicion. Apparently they assumed she was a hotel employee, and had used a key on the door. She clicked the door closed and dropped the picklock back into her purse.

Kelly started with the desk. A quick search revealed

nothing of interest to her in the unlocked drawers, but the bottom drawer on the right was locked. It took her about ten seconds to open it with her picklock.

The only things of interest to her in the drawer were four folded sheets. The two top ones at first appeared to be blank, but when she touched one, she found that there were indentations running across the paper in straight lines. After puzzling over it for a moment, she deduced that it was braille. Looking at the last two sheets, she instantly realized that they were a typed translation of the braille. The letter began *"Dear Dad,"* and was signed *"Love, Brooke."* It was the missing second letter from Brooke to her father, Kelly realized with a sense of elation as she scanned it. The first sheet read:

Dear Dad:

I have finished the manuscript I previously wrote you about, and it's really going to blow the lid off things around here. It's a good thing I took precautions to hide the script, because I think my apartment was searched last night.

Remember where I used to hide my money when I was in college? Well, that's where I have the manuscript. It's all packaged and addressed to the publisher, so all I have to do is have it weighed and meter stamped at the post office. I don't want to mail it from Seacliffe, because I have a feeling I'm under observation, and I wouldn't put it past these people even to rob the mails to prevent exposure. I plan to drive over to Riser tomorrow and mail it from there.

The second page recounted activities by the dead girl having no bearing on Moonshadows. Nevertheless Kelly photographed both sheets with her mini-camera.

After refolding the sheets, she replaced them in the bottom drawer and relocked the drawer. Then she turned her attention to the single file cabinet in the office.

It was a four-drawer file cabinet. The top three

drawers seemed to be concerned solely with the running of Moonshadows. There were contracts and correspondence with suppliers of foods, drinks, linens, kitchen and dining room supplies, and files on all the other matters involved in running a large hotel.

The bottom drawer was locked. Kelly again used her picklock. Inside were Paul Terranova's personal files. There were receipts, income tax returns, records of stock transactions and a folder containing personal correspondence. A quick examination disclosed nothing concerning the Seacliffe Bay Marina Complex, however, until she came to a portfolio containing three file folders labeled *"Seacliffe Isles Marina Complex," "Marina Hotel,"* and *"Matrix Development Corp."*

It would have taken several hours of study to comprehend everything in the three folders, but a quick thumb-through was enough to convince Kelly she had found the key to the conspiracy that had gotten Brooke Anderson killed. The Matrix Development Corporation seemed to be a holding company that secretly held title to some property at Seacliffe Bay, as well as a controlling interest in the as yet unbuilt Marina Hotel. Just exactly what property in the bay area the company owned, Kelly was unable to determine from her brief examination.

She did find a list of the board of directors of the Matrix Development Corporation, though. Paul Terranova was chairman of the board and president of the company. Dr. William Dignam was first vice-president. An August Fitzgerald was second vice-president. Elizabeth Terranova was secretary. And Deputy Sheriff Albert Flynn was treasurer.

Kelly began photographing everything in the three files. It was going to take her a long time—at least a half hour, she guessed. And she had already been in the office about a half hour. She hoped Jill was keeping Paul Terranova well occupied.

It was five P.M. before Sabrina arrived at the cocktail party. She was wearing a sexy-looking red dress, low cut and sleeveless. She looked over the crowd

in the lobby, spotted neither of the two other angels nor Bosley, and began to work her way through the mob in the cocktail lounge.

Three men stopped her en route to the bar with offers to get her a drink. She merely smiled and wormed her way on. When she neared the bar, she spotted Jill with a handsome man in his late forties that she guessed from his description was Paul Terranova. There was no sign of either Kelly or Bosley.

Deciding not to interfere with whatever Jill had going, she circled toward the buffet. She found Bosley there, nibbling a smoked herring.

"Cordalia," he said. "You're late." He looked her over. "I guess the wait was worth it, though. Have a herring?"

"Why, thank you, daddy. For the compliment, I mean. No thanks to the herring."

Bosley downed the rest of the fish and wiped his fingers on a paper napkin. "Stop calling me daddy," he instructed.

"All right, father." She looked him up and down. "A tuxedo for an afternoon party? And with brown shoes?"

"I've already been through that with Jill," he said. "I would prefer not to hear any more about it."

"I just saw Jill at the bar with a good-looking man in white trousers and a blue sport jacket. Is that Paul Terranova?"

Bosley nodded. "She's keeping him occupied for Kelly."

"Oh? Where's Kelly?"

Bosley glanced around, saw no eavesdroppers and said in a low voice, "In Terranova's office, I hope. At least she left for there forty-five minutes ago."

Sabrina glanced around also. "You know, I don't think we needed this silly men's-clothes-designer, male-model cover. In this mob nobody's going to question what or who we are."

"Always a chance," Bosley informed her. "And the agency motto is, Be Prepared."

"Bosley, that's the motto of the Boy Scouts of America," Sabrina told him.

Big Jock Koslo came in from the lobby and pushed his way through the crowd in the cocktail lounge, looking in all directions. When he finally spotted Terranova at the bar, he edged his way to him.

"See you a minute, boss?" he asked. "In private, I mean."

"Sure," Terranova said. He smiled at Jill. "Don't disappear."

Returning his smile with a sultry one of her own, she said, "That's exactly what I was about to tell you."

Koslo led the way toward the outside exit. Over his shoulder he said to Terranova, "No way to talk in this mob."

En route to the door they bumped into the dark-chinned Harry West. Stopping Terranova, the hotel detective said, "I've been looking for you. I've got the dope on that girl photographer."

"Follow along," Terranova instructed. "I'll listen to both of you at once."

When the trio got outdoors, they found even a few drinkers there. There was no one on the tennis courts, though. They walked over to them, pausing next to a bench for spectators.

Raising his left foot to the bench seat, Terranova rested his elbow on his knee and said, "Okay, Jock, you go first."

Koslo said, "The reason Spencer hasn't reported back after I sent him after that Duncan girl is that he went through a guard rail on the Pacific Coast Highway and dropped fifty feet. I just got a call about it from Al Flynn. The car burned up."

"Spencer dead?" Terranova asked with a frown.

"Well, as I said, he dropped fifty feet and the car burned up," Koslo said dryly. "Would be my guess." He took out his mistometer and used it.

Terranova rubbed his neck irritably. After a moment he asked, "Flynn have any report on the girl?"

"I didn't ask him. He might have put two and two

together and figured out that I sent Spencer after her. He didn't mention her, though, and I think he would have if she was dead."

"That complicates things," Terranova said irritably. "She knows too much to stay alive. It worries me that she works for that Charlie Townsend fellow. He's got a scary reputation." He looked at the hotel detective. "What kind of bad news you got?"

"It's not bad," the dark-chinned man said. "Kelly Garrett's got several thousand dollars worth of cameras and photographic equipment in her room. She's got a flock of New York City charge cards and a book of personalized checks on a New York City bank, giving her New York City address. Just to make sure, I phoned *Fashion Daily* in New York City and talked to the photo editor. She is on assignment to do a feature on west coast vacation spots. So I guess she's on the up-and-up."

Dropping his foot from the bench to the grass, Terranova took a cigarette from his silver case and lit it. "Thank God for small favors, anyway," he said. "Anything else?"

"Yeah. Doc Dignam wants you to phone him at the warehouse. Says it's urgent."

"Why the hell didn't you tell me that first?" Terranova flared at him. He tossed his cigarette away after only one puff.

The hotel detective looked hurt. "I don't know how urgent it really is. He sounded a little drunk."

"I'll call him from my office," Terranova said, and headed for the parking lot, with the intention of entering the lobby by the side door.

The other two fell in at his side. Terranova said to Koslo, "What about George Anderson?"

"Still over at the stables. Inga's been giving him regular massages, but he's still like a clam. Claims he doesn't have any recollection of where his daughter kept her money in college."

"Tell Inga to keep working on him," Terranova instructed.

They reached the side door, went into the lobby,

and crossed it together to Terranova's office. He keyed open the door and went in first. Then he stopped so dead in his tracks that the hotel detective bumped into him from behind.

Kelly Garrett had papers from an open file folder spread all over Terranova's desk, and was photographing them with a miniature camera.

Seventeen

Jock Koslo pushed the door closed with a slight bang. Kelly set down her camera and grabbed for her purse, which lay on one end of the desk. Terranova, West and Koslo simultaneously whipped out pistols and pointed them at her. Kelly froze.

Attempting a smile, but in a slightly quavering voice, she said, "Three guns against one unarmed girl? Aren't we brave warriors?"

Terranova said, "Don't make a wrong move, love. It would hurt me to put a bullet hole into that beautiful body of yours."

Kelly turned her smile sexy, but was unable to keep the quaver entirely out of her voice. "I'm sure if we sat down alone over a quiet drink, I could give you a satisfactory explanation for all this."

"You'll get your chance," Terranova said with a wolfish smile. "Now, slow and easy, step back from the desk with your hands in sight."

Kelly backed away. Terranova said to West, "Keep her covered," and put away his gun.

Koslo put away his too. Terranova circled around the desk and behind Kelly, carefully not stepping between West and the girl. At the same time Koslo went

over to look in Kelly's purse. He drew out a snub-nosed .32 caliber revolver.

"Well, well," he said. "Look what the little girl carries."

"Let's see if you have any more, love," Terranova said from behind Kelly. He began running his hands over her body.

"Hey!" Kelly said indignantly, pulling away.

West said in a suddenly deadly voice. "If you so much as squirm again, lady, I'm going to put a bullet between your cute little bulges. Now stand still!"

Kelly stood still. Terranova continued his shake-down, making it thorough, but somehow also managing to make it impersonal. When he finished, he walked around alongside of her and examined her broodingly. She gazed back at him with indignation.

"I was only interested in what other weapons you might be carrying," he assured her dryly.

Suppressing her indignation, Kelly forced the sexy, invitational smile back on her face. "It was just the audience I objected to. If you send them away, we could discuss this in private."

Koslo, still going through her purse, said, "The lady carries all sorts of equipment." He held up the picklock. "The question is, is she a professional burglar or a professional cop?" He took out his mistometer and sprayed his nostrils.

Terranova turned on Harry West with sudden anger, the sight of the picklock apparently acting as a last straw. "She carries a gun, she picks locks like Houdini, and photographs all my personal papers. But you cleared her. I guess she's on the up-and-up, you said. Where the hell did you learn to be a detective?"

"She checked out clean," the hotel detective said defensively. "I checked everything in her room, and even phoned the editor in New York she's supposed to be working for. I couldn't check her purse, because she had it with her."

"Get off his back, boss," Koslo advised. "She just had too good a cover."

Terranova made a dismissing gesture. "All right,

West. Maybe you can make it up. Maybe Inga can get the answer to Jock's question out of her. Take the lady over to the stables. See if she's ready for a little dialogue about who she really is, and who she's taking pictures for."

Kelly said, "I thought we were going to have our own private little talk."

"Sorry," Terranova said sardonically. "That's not exactly what I had in mind. What I had in mind was to let Inga give you another massage. Maybe some time alone in a room with her would improve your personality."

Koslo said to West, "How you going to get her across the lobby with all those people out there?"

The hotel detective, who had let the muzzle of his gun droop downward as soon as Terranova finished his frisk of the girl, now put it away. Dipping his left hand into his jacket pocket, he brought it out again, there was a sharp click and a thin seven-inch blade appeared. He slipped the handle of the switchblade knife up his sleeve until the blade lay across his palm with the tip not quite showing beyond his center finger.

Rounding the desk, he motioned Terranova aside and slipped his left arm about Kelly's waist. She felt the prick of the needle-sharp point of the blade in her side.

"Now, honey, we're going to walk across the lobby and right out the front door like a pair of lovers," he said. "You yell, or try to run, or even wink at anybody, and I'll spill your guts all over the new carpeting. Understand?"

Licking her lips, Kelly nodded. "I understand."

Releasing her, West folded the knife and dropped it back in his pocket. "Little arranging to do first," he said, and picked up the desk phone. He said to the switchboard operator, "Get me the stables across the street."

Koslo dropped Kelly's gun and picklock back into her purse, snapped the purse shut and asked Terranova, "What you want to do with this?"

Terranova held out his hand for it, and Koslo

reached across the desk to give it to him. Squatting before the desk, Terranova unlocked the bottom drawer on the right, shoved the purse and Kelly's camera into it, and relocked it.

As the hotel director rose to his feet again, West was saying into the phone, "Augie? Harry West here. Mr. Terranova wants you to bring the panel truck over to the main door of the hotel right away."

After listening, he said, "Mr. Terranova told me not to answer questions. He said just do it."

He hung up.

"That's one way to get fast results," Terranova said dryly. Then he snapped his fingers. "I completely forgot what we came in here for was to return Doc's call. I better do that before we take her over there."

Seating himself at the desk, he lifted the phone and asked the switchboard operator for a number.

The person who answered must have been waiting by the phone, because Terranova almost immediately said, "Schilling? Dignam left word for me to phone."

He listened for a moment, then said, "Jesus Christ! No, I don't need to talk to Dignam. I'll be right there." After listening again, he said, "Why do you want it? Never mind, don't explain over the phone, I'll take care of it."

When he hung up, both Koslo and West gave him inquiring looks.

"Trouble at the warehouse," he said. "Harry, you stick with the girl and tell Inga what I want out of her. Jock, you come with me. Do you know if the hotel charter boat is out today?"

"Wasn't this morning," Koslo said. "Haven't checked this afternoon."

Rising to his feet, Terranova said, "I'll check it out while you're getting the Rolls. Let's go."

Harry West's switchblade knife came out again, snapped open, and slipped up his sleeve. Putting his arm about Kelly's waist, he said, "Okay, sweetheart, let's take a walk down lover's lane."

When Paul Terranova hadn't returned after fifteen

minutes, Jill began to become uneasy. Finally she set her glass on the bar and edged her way through the crowd to the door leading outside.

There were a number of people from the party near the door, but no sign of Terranova and his companions. Jill walked over to the corner of the building to look out over the parking lot. Terranova's silver gray Rolls Royce was still on the lot, indicating that he was around somewhere. She guessed that he had reentered the hotel by the side door into the lobby, which worried her. Perhaps he had merely decided it would be easier to fight the crowd in the cocktail lounge by using the entrance from the lobby, but it was equally possible he had gone to his office for some reason.

Jill hurried along the side of the building to the side entrance and went in. There was no sign of Terranova and the two men he had left with, and his office door was closed. Casually moving over to it, she waited until the registration clerk was looking the other way, then quickly tried the knob. The door was locked.

She went back into the cocktail lounge and wormed her way through the crowd, looking for Bosley. She found him with Sabrina near the buffet table.

"Hi, Sabrina," she said. "Bosley, I'm worried about Kelly. That Koslo man took Terranova outdoors for a private conversation a good twenty minutes ago. Enroute to the door they picked up the hotel detective. I just checked outdoors, and they aren't there. And Terranova's Rolls is still on the lot. I think they went into the lobby by the side entrance."

"You check the office?"

Jill nodded. "The door's locked. Which doesn't necessarily mean Kelly's not still in there. She'd keep it locked."

Sabrina said crisply, "Bosley, wait here to see if Kelly or Terranova come back. We'll check his office again, this time with a picklock."

She and Jill pushed their way through the crowd into the lobby. Just as they got there, they saw the door to Terranova's office open, and Kelly and the

hotel detective came out. He had his arm lovingly about her waist, and was looking down into her face tenderly. Kelly's face was pale, but there was a fixed smile on it.

Right behind the two came Paul Terranova and Jock Koslo. The four moved casually across the lobby toward the front door.

"Who's that goon with Kelly?" Sabrina asked.

The question surprised Jill until she remembered that this was Sabrina's first visit to the hotel. "The hotel dick," she said. "Harry West. The man with Terranova is Jock Koslo, Terranova's chauffeur and general flunky."

The two girls followed the quartet, shielded from their notice by the cocktail party guests in the lobby. But when the group went outdoors, they halted to watch through the glass.

A panel truck was parked in front. As Kelly and her captors went down the steps, the driver got out to open the back of the truck. He was a stocky man in his mid-fifties with a round face and graying hair.

Sabrina said in astonishment, "That's George Anderson! But how can he drive? He's blind."

Jill looked at her without understanding. "Who's George Anderson?"

"The driver of that panel truck."

"You have your wires crossed," Jill said. "That's August Fitzgerald, who runs the riding stables across the street. I saw him with the Terranovas in the dining room last night when I was going from the coffee shop to my room, and asked a waiter who he was."

Kelly and the hotel detective were getting into the back of the panel truck. The driver slammed the door and got back behind the wheel.

"They conned me!" Sabrina breathed. "That's why we walked on the beach instead of going inside. The real George Anderson was in the house, chloroformed!" She hit her forehead with the heel of her hand. "How stupid can a girl get? It just registered on me that he gave himself away, and I missed it."

"How?" Jill asked.

"His pipe went out while we were walking on the beach. I took out my cigarette lighter at the same time he took out a lighter. He said, 'Never mind, this is one of those with a jet flame for pipe smokers.' How would he know I'd taken out my lighter if he was blind? Isn't that dumb?"

Jill said, "Well, nobody's perfect."

The truck drove off, and Terranova and Koslo disappeared to the right, moving in the direction of the parking lot. Sabrina pushed open the door to go outside, Jill trailing after her.

They watched the panel truck cross the road and enter the driveway into the Fitzgerald Riding Stables. Glancing right, they saw Terranova and Koslo just rounding the corner to the parking lot.

"I'll stay with Kelly," Sabrina said. "You take those two."

Eighteen

Jill turned to reenter the lobby and hurried across to the side door. Looking through the glass, she saw Koslo angling off across the parking lot alone in the direction of the parked Rolls Royce. Puzzled by what happened to Terranova, she stepped outdoors. He was walking along the side of the building toward the rear, his back to her.

She followed at a discreet distance, one eye on the heavyset Jock Koslo. Fortunately the Rolls was parked with its back her way, so that when the big man reached it and climbed under the steering wheel, he was still faced away from her.

Terranova continued on past the tennis courts to

the railed wooden stairway that led down to the beach. Jill halted at the top of the stairs to look down.

The hotel director walked out on the small floating dock to which the hotel's charter boat was tied. It was a thirty-two-foot cabin cruiser with twin diesel engines. The bearded skipper, a husky man in his mid-twenties in white ducks and a tee shirt, was seated in a deck chair reading a magazine. When Terranova called to him, he came over dockside and stooped down.

After a brief conversation, Terranova started back toward the stairway. Jill ducked back and headed across the tennis courts. Glancing toward the parking lot, she saw that Koslo had backed the Rolls from its slot and was driving over to the back end of the parking lot, to pick up Terranova.

Jill hurried across the tennis courts to the group gathered outside the cocktail lounge door and along the rear of the building to the parking lot. Koslo had pulled the Rolls over to the edge of the lot with its left side to her, but was looking the other way, toward the stairway down to the beach. Unfortunately Jill's car was parked in the far southwest corner of the lot, directly in his view.

Sabrina's Nova was parked only a few yards away, however. And just in case of emergencies such as this, the angels carried keys to each other's cars. Jill ran over to it, tried to unlock the door on the driver's side, and discovered it was jammed. That entire side of the car was all banged up. Jill rounded the car to get in by the right-hand door, put the key in the ignition and waited.

Terranova climbed into the Rolls next to the driver. As the Rolls swung her way, Jill dropped sideways on the seat. As soon as she heard it go by, she sat erect again and followed.

The Rolls took the Pacific Coast Highway north about four miles, then took a paved road leading toward Seacliffe Bay. A block from the water the Rolls turned right to drive parallel to the docks a little over

a block, then turned left into an alley between two warehouses.

When Jill reached the alley, the Rolls was nowhere in sight. But as she drifted past the driveway on the other side of the second warehouse, she realized it had circled the building, because it was just disappearing through a truck entrance into the building. She drove on to the next intersection, made a U-turn, and drove back to park just short of the driveway. By then the sliding door over the truck entrance had been closed.

She slid across the seat to get out by the right-hand door and walked over to look at the truck entrance. Over it was a long wooden sign reading Warehouse 1, Berth 23. On the door was another sign reading No Trespassing. Violators Will Be Prosecuted.

Jill saw no point in trying the door, because even if it was unlocked, the noise from sliding it open would alert everyone in the building. As there were no other doors on that side, and the only two windows were twenty feet above the ground, she went around front, where she had noticed another door.

That door was off a small porch that had three wooden steps leading up to it. The same signs were here as around on the side. Jill guessed the door led into the warehouse office. She tried it and found it locked.

It was then she realized she had left her purse in the car. The awkwardness of having to slide across the seat to get out on the right-hand side had distracted her enough to make her forget to pick it up. She contemplated returning to the car for it so that she could try her picklock on the door, then decided to seek some other means of entry first on the logical grounds that she wasn't very good with a picklock anyway.

There was a window with a drawn blind alongside the door. She tried it, and found it locked also. She went around to walk up the alley on the other side of the building. There were two windows on that side too, also about twenty feet above the ground.

But a telephone pole only about six inches from the building went within a foot of one, which Jill could see was slightly open from the bottom.

There were iron foot rungs imbedded in the telephone pole, but they didn't begin until ten feet above the ground. Glancing around to make sure no one was in sight, Jill slipped out of her flat-heeled pumps, stuck one in each of the hip pockets in her shorts, gripped the pole with both hands, and raised a bare foot to plant the sole against the pole as high as she could lift it. Leaning backward, she walked up the pole, as if it were a coconut palm, until she reached the iron rungs.

Standing on the bottom rungs and holding onto one of the higher ones with her left hand, she slipped her shoes back on because the narrow rungs were too painful to stand on barefoot. Then she climbed the rest of the way until her head was even with the bottom of the window.

The glass was too grimy to see through. Leaning to the right, she attempted to peer through the narrow slit where the window was open at the bottom, but it was too dimly lit inside for her to make out anything at all.

She climbed a little higher, gripped the bottom part of the window and raised it all the way. It squeaked from long disuse, putting her heart in her throat, but there was no reaction from inside. After waiting a few moments to make sure there wasn't going to be one, she leaned over to peer in again.

She was looking into a dimly lit loft with a six-foot-square opening in the floor off to her right. Except for a few cardboard boxes, the loft was empty.

Jill climbed through the window and tiptoed toward the opening in the floor. That was the means of descent to the first floor, she saw. A wooden ladder leading downward was nailed to the wall.

When Jack Koslo drove the Rolls-Royce through the truck entrance into the warehouse, the sliding door was immediately closed behind it. Koslo and Terra-

nova got out and looked around. The ceiling of the first floor of the building was eighteen feet high, and most of the interior was one big room. There was nothing in the room but several huge pieces of dredging equipment, a white official car with a county decal on its door, and a pickup truck.

The man who had closed the door was thick-chested, stolid-looking, and in his mid-thirties. He was wearing coveralls and had an off-center left eye.

"Where's Dignam?" Terranova asked him.

"In the office, trying to settle his nerves," the man said.

Terranova headed for the office, tailed by Koslo. The office was only a small room containing a single desk and a couple of dusty filing cabinets. They found Dr. William Dignam seated at the desk, smoking a cigarette. A half-empty pint bottle of bourbon sat on the desk.

"Are you drunk?" Terranova demanded.

"Course not," the geologist said a trifle thickly. "After this shock, there isn't enough liquor in the world to get me drunk."

He reached for the bottle, but Terranova beat him to it. Snatching it up, he hurled it against the far wall to shatter into fragments.

"You're going to keep a clear head until I find out what happened," Terranova said harshly. He grabbed the cigarette from Dignam's hand, threw it on the floor and stepped on it. Then he jerked the geologist to his feet by the lapels and pushed him toward the door. "We'll get Schilling into the conference too, so there won't be any crossed wires."

Taking the man's arm, he hustled him across the big room to where the man in coveralls was leaning against a piece of dredging equipment.

"All right, start talking," Terranova said. "And both of you better make sense."

Down below the lighting wasn't quite so dim as in the loft, but it was hardly bright. A single overhead light in the center of the huge room illuminated its center, but the large pieces of machinery and equip-

ment stored in the room cast massive shadows. One of the shadows obscured the ladder.

Listening, Jill could hear voices coming from the direction of the office, but they were too far away to make out what was said. Kneeling next to the opening in the floor, she peered down, saw no evidence of activity in the immediate area, and decided it was safe to descend the ladder. She went down as quietly as she could.

A movement off to her left just after she had reached the floor sent her gaze darting that way. A thick-bodied man in work coveralls was leaning against one of the pieces of heavy equipment not five feet away. Fortunately his back was partially to her. Jill edged to the right, behind another piece of heavy equipment, then worked her way from shadow to shadow across the room to its opposite side. Her strategy was to get herself as close as possible to the sliding door in case she had to take flight.

She wasn't able to get very close, because none of the heavy equipment was near the door. She settled in the shadow of a large piece of dredging machinery and waited to see what happened.

Footsteps coming from the direction of the office turned her gaze that way. She saw Paul Terranova gripping Dr. William Dignam by the arm, hustling him along, trailed by Jock Koslo. Belatedly she realized she had picked a poor place of concealment. While she was invisible to the man in coveralls, only shadow prevented the approaching trio from spotting her. When they neared, she was sure they couldn't miss her unless she faded around to the other side of the machine, where she would be in equally full view of the man in coveralls.

Hurriedly glancing around, Jill spotted a door behind her with a sign on it reading Tool Room. She backed toward the door, her gaze fixed on the approaching trio, felt behind her for the door handle and pulled on it.

To her relief, the door wasn't locked. Pulling it

open only about two feet, she slipped inside and closed it again.

The room was about ten feet square, and had no ceiling. It was merely an enclosure of boards about ten teet high. Since the warehouse ceiling was eighteen feet high, the glow from its single centrally located light illuminated it somewhat, but not much. According to the sign on its door, it had once been a tool room, but it obviously was no longer used as one. There was nothing in it but a line of lockers against the rear wall. In the dim light Jill could just barely make them out.

She heard Paul Terranova's voice rasp. "All right, start talking. And both of you better make sense."

In a voice she hardly recognized because it was both thick and shaking, Dignam said, "Arranging for the purchase of the bay bottom and the change in the bulkhead line was all I was supposed to be involved in. Not this."

"You haven't even told me what *this* is yet," Terranova snarled at him. "Listen, commissioner, I've been paying you through the nose too long to have you melt on me now. Now knock off your babbling and tell me what happened!"

"It was Schilling did it," Dignam said in a whining voice. "I didn't have anything to do with it."

"With what?" Terranova shouted. "Buck, what happened?"

A low voice Jill guessed was that of the coveralled man said, "My guess is the guy followed Doc here earlier this afternoon, then came back when he figured nobody was here."

"Stupid!" Terranova spat, apparently at Dignam, but his next words seemed to be addressed to Buck Schilling. "You said over the phone he was a guest at the hotel. How do you know?"

"Doc said he saw him there."

"Well, commissioner?"

Dignam's shaky voice said, "He's been around the hotel for weeks. I don't know who he is or how he

found this place. Maybe he did follow me here earlier when I came out. Anyway, when I was here the first time, I arranged with Schilling to meet him back here around five, to see if we could unfreeze that scoop engine. When we got here, we caught this guy prowling through the place."

"So he saw all the dredging equipment."

"What's the matter now?" Schilling asked.

"What's it matter?" Terranova repeated in a high voice. "He must be some kind of cop, or he wouldn't have been snooping around."

"You got this all wrong, Mr. Terranova," Buck Schilling said. "We didn't let him get away."

After a long pause, Terranova said, "Oh. Where is he?"

"Over there," Dignam's voice said.

Jill wished she could see where the geologist was indicating. Cracking the door open wouldn't help, because a large piece of equipment blocked the view. She retreated to the row of lockers to see if it would be possible to climb atop them in order to see over the top of the wall. Perhaps if she opened one of the doors, she could boost herself up.

She pulled on a door, but it was either locked or stuck. She shook it slightly.

The hand of someone lying on top of the row of lockers dropped down onto her left shoulder admonishingly.

Nineteen

Jill barely suppressed a squeal of fright. Staring at the hand, her panic dissolved when the dim light caught the glitter of rows of diamonds spelling out Harvey on a finger ring.

In a relieved whisper she said, "Harvey! You nearly scared me to death. What are you doing here? Never mind, I know. Bosley told me you're a Senate investigator. You're working on the same thing we are."

The voice of Terranova, much nearer, said, "I should have guessed when you said to send the boat, Buck. But I've got a lot of things on my mind."

"You told Gunner to sail it up here?" Schilling's voice asked.

"He should have it berthed by now. You and Gunner will have to handle things without any help, because I have to get back."

"Can't you leave Koslo?"

"I'll need Jock. Maybe Dignam can help you."

"I don't want any part of it," Dignam's voice said thickly. "Cold blooded murder! *Two* killings!"

"Will you shut up?" Terranova said in an enraged voice. "You're driving me bananas with your whining."

"Two killings?" Jill whispered. "Brooke Anderson and who else?"

She was answered by a chilling silence. Goose bumps rose on her neck as a horrible suspicion gripped her.

"Harvey?" she whispered tentatively, shrinking back from the hand on her shoulder.

The lifeless hand slipped off to hang limply downward. She stared up at the dim face atop the locker,

unable to make it out in the poor light, but knowing it belonged to a dead man.

"Oh, my God!" she said, appalled. "Harvey!"

Then the light suddenly increased as the door behind her opened. She spun around to face the coveralled man gazing at her in astonishment. Behind him was Paul Terranova, and behind him Koslo and Dignam.

A sense of frustration mixed with her fear as she thought of the purse lying on the front seat of her car with her snub-nosed .32 in it. The thought had hardly entered her mind before she was staring into the muzzles of three guns. Dignam was the only one who hadn't drawn one.

Smiling weakly, Jill showed her empty hands.

"Come out of there," Buck Schilling ordered, his right eye fixed on her and his off-center left eye gazing past her right ear.

He stepped back from the doorway to let her emerge. Terranova made a complete circle around her, examining her tight shorts and brief halter, then put away his gun.

"There's no concealed weapons in that outfit," he said.

The other two men put away their guns also. The three stood glowering at her in silence for a time. William Dignam merely looked upset.

Finally Terranova said, "Female spies are beginning to come out of the woodwork. You working with that photographer broad?"

"I don't know who you mean," Jill said innocently.

Jock Koslo was squirting mist up his nose. When he finished, he said, "My guess is both of them are working with that female lawyer. And she works for Charlie Townsend."

After considering this, Terranova nodded. "Doesn't really matter who she's working for, though. She knows about him." He gestured toward the tool room. "Only one thing we can do."

"Now?" the man with the off-center eye asked, reaching into the side pocket of his coveralls.

"Not another murder!" Dignam said on a high note. "I won't stand for it!"

Terranova gave him a disgusted look. "*You* won't stand for it? You're running this operation now?"

"I mean, do we have to?" Dignam asked weakly. "Isn't there any other way?"

Buck Schilling was still standing with his hand in his pocket, looking inquiringly at Terranova with his good eye, and staring at Jill with his other. Terranova gave an impatient shrug.

"We can't disturb the doctor's sensibilities," he said sarcastically. "Take her along on the boat, Buck, and get rid of her at the same time you dump the body."

"You'd better let me go," Jill said a trifle unsteadily. "I phoned the police before I came here, and they've probably got the place surrounded."

Terranova gave her a bleak smile. "The police in Seacliffe?"

"Yes."

"If you had done that, I would have gotten a call. Deputy Sheriff Al Flynn is on our side."

Jill mentally kicked herself for not thinking faster. Sabrina had intimated that the deputy sheriff was in Terranova's pocket.

"Well, I also phoned the sheriff himself, over in Riser."

"Sure you did," Terranova said indulgently. "Okay, Buck, better tie her up. Jock and I will help you get her down to the boat before we leave."

Taking his hand from his pocket, the coveralled man went into the tool room. He could be heard opening one of the lockers. He returned carrying a length of quarter-inch-thick rope.

"Turn around and cross your wrists behind you," he said to Jill.

When she didn't instantly comply, Terranova gave her a brutal slap across the face. Shocked, almost on the verge of tears, Jill turned her back to Schilling and crossed her wrists behind her.

He did a thorough job of lashing her wrists to-

gether, and cut off the excess rope with a knife he took from his pocket.

When he finished, he said to Terranova, "Shouldn't we wait until after dark?"

"It won't be dark for a couple of more hours," Terranova said. "I have to get back. Inga's working over another prowling woman we caught in my office."

"Got any canvas around here?" Koslo asked.

"Some tarp covers that came with some of the machinery," Schilling said.

"Roll 'em both in that, and anyone sees us will just think it's fishing equipment or something for the boat."

Schilling crossed the room to where a stack of folded tarpaulins stood against the wall, pulled off the top one and unfolded it on the floor. It was about twenty feet square. With his knife he cut two pieces about six by eight feet and dragged them over behind the pickup truck.

"No point in lugging them any farther than necessary," he said. "Jock, help me carry the fat guy over here."

Koslo followed him into the tool room. A few moments later they emerged carrying the inert body of Harvey Sunday. There was a large bloodstain in the center of his chest. They carried him over to lay him on one of the two pieces of tarp.

As they prepared to roll him up in the canvas, Terranova said, "Hold it a minute."

Taking Jill's arm, he steered her over that way. She averted her eyes from the dead man. William Dignam, looking sick, went over to seat himself in his car.

"He didn't have any identification on him?" Terranova asked Schilling.

"Nothing, unless you count that ring. Incidentally, no point in burying that at sea."

He stooped to take the dead man's hand, but quickly dropped it again when Terranova snapped at him, "Leave it, you damned fool!"

Rising again, the coveralled man gave Terranova a hurt look.

"You want to advertise that you killed the guy?" Terranova inquired. "He was probably some kind of cop." He looked at Jill. "I've seen you in the cocktail lounge with him. Who was he?"

Remembering the slap, and also not seeing how the information could possibly help him, Jill said, "One of your guests. Harvey Sunday, from Phoenix. He manufactured women's underwear."

"A cover," Terranova said. "Is he Charlie Townsend?"

The question startled her so much that she gazed at him with her mouth open.

"He isn't," Terranova decided, examining her face. "But your expression gives away that you know Townsend. All three of you girls work for him, don't you?"

"I haven't the faintest idea of what you're talking about," Jill said in a voice she barely managed to keep steady.

"You tell me who else is working for him and I might cancel your boat ride," Terranova offered.

She summoned a scornful smile. "No, you wouldn't. After you pumped me dry, you'd have me killed anyway. But I'll tell you one thing. Charlie has two dozen agents working on this case, and you haven't got a chance."

"You're a lousy liar," he told her. "Now I know there's just the three of you. We've got two, and we'll take care of the third in due time." He turned to Schilling and Koslo. "Okay, wrap him up."

The two men rolled the corpse in the tarp, Schilling tied a piece of rope about the center, and they lifted the burden into the back of the pickup truck.

Terranova took out a handkerchief, wadded it into a ball, told Jill to open her mouth and stuffed it in. He got another handkerchief from Koslo and tied it around her head to keep the gag in place.

"That's to keep you from trying to attract attention," he said. "Lie down on the other tarp."

Jill lay on the tarpaulin and was rolled up in it. She felt Schilling tying a piece of rope around it, then felt

herself being lifted and lowered into the back of the truck.

They laid her face down. She had no trouble breathing, because the open end of the tarp was only about eighteen inches away. But she had never felt so helpless in her life.

Twenty

Inside the panel truck Harry West kept the knife in his hand, but no longer kept his arm around Kelly. There were benches running along each side. The hotel detective allowed Kelly to sit on one, and took a seat opposite her. Periodically he flipped the switchblade knife in the air and caught it again.

They rode a very short distance, only across the road, along a long driveway, and into a stable. The driver got out, closed the stable door and opened the door in the rear of the panel truck. West got out and motioned Kelly to get out also.

Looking around, Kelly saw that the stable contained about twenty stalls, about a dozen of them with riding horses in them. There was a strong barnlike odor of hay and manure.

"This way," the driver said.

He led the way to a smaller door in the large sliding door he had just closed. Opening it, he peered out in both directions before motioning to West and Kelly to follow him. Still carrying the knife, West made no attempt to conceal it as they stepped outdoors. He held it at his side in his left hand as he steered Kelly along by the left elbow.

Alongside the stable they had emerged from was a

corral, and beyond it was a second stable. A large barn was beyond it, but to the right and facing this way. Directly across from them was a two-story white frame house. To the left of it, near the barn, was a long, low, one-story frame building. A riding trail began between this building and the barn, curved behind the barn and then ran off across country.

No one was in sight. That puzzled Kelly until she realized it was now about six P.M. Probably the stables closed at 5:30.

The driver led the way to the long one-story building to the left of the house. When they entered, Kelly discovered it was a saddle-repair shop. Several saddles were on wooden horses in various stages of repair.

Still leading the way, the driver turned left to a door at the far end of the shop. He opened it to disclose a windowless nine-by-twelve room that probably had been intended as a storeroom, but now was being used for a totally different purpose.

The only two pieces of furniture in the room were a long table in the center and a cot against the wall. A burly gray-haired man in his fifties lay face-up on the table, stripped to the waist. Standing next to the table, taking the man's pulse, was Inga Svensen in her usual work clothes: shorts and a halter. A ventilator fan in one corner made a loud humming noise.

Inga dropped the man's wrist and gave Kelly a sharply disapproving look as the three came in. To the driver she said, "What is this, Mr. Fitzgerald? Why is she here?"

Fitzgerald, Kelly thought. That was the name of the stables, so this must be the proprietor.

"Terranova's orders," Fitzgerald said.

"Oh," the blonde amazon said, her disapproving expression disappearing.

"What's the matter with him?" Fitzgerald asked, going over to look down at the man on the table.

The masseuse shrugged. "His pulse is normal."

Fitzgerald peeled back an eyelid, looked into the eye, let the eyelid fall back in place and said to West,

"Inga's either massaged him around too much, or it's the chloroform. He's out."

"The look of the eyeball means nothing on a blind man," Inga said scornfully. "I think he fakes it all. I can make him tell us if you want to risk it. There is a way to reach under a man's rib cage to his heart muscle. One squeeze, and he either talks or dies."

"He can't tell us what his daughter meant in that letter if he's dead," West said. "Have you gotten anything at all out of him?"

"He claims he doesn't know what she meant," Inga said. "Says he can't remember where his daughter kept her money in college."

Indicating Kelly with his knife blade, West said, "Well, I've got another massage client for you. We caught her photographing Terranova's private files. He wants to know why."

Inga looked Kelly over with an anticipatory smile on her face. "She will tell me," she assured the hotel detective.

Turning, she bent over the table, shoved one arm under the unconscious man's knees, the other beneath his shoulders, and easily lifted him in her arms. Carrying him over to the cot, she dropped him onto it. Then she turned back to Kelly.

"Get the jacket of that pantsuit off," she ordered.

"In front of them?" Kelly protested.

"Little Miss Modesty, eh? Would you rather I ripped it off?"

Reluctantly Kelly removed the jacket, looked around for a place to put it, and spotted a nail in the wall. She hung it there. Under the jacket she had on only a brassiere.

Pointing to the table, Inga said, "Lie down."

Kelly went over to lie on her back on the table. Inga walked over and patted her cheek.

"We're going to have fun, you and I," the blonde amazon said with a cold smile. "You're going to tell me everything I want to know."

Harry West snapped his knife shut and put it away.

Inga's middle finger probed for a pressure point behind Kelly's ear and pressed. Kelly emitted a scream of agony.

After Jill left her, Sabrina watched the panel truck continue along the driveway leading into the grounds of the Fitzgerald Riding Stables and disappear through the open door of a stable on the left side of the barnyard. She couldn't have followed it with her eyes if the driveway hadn't been directly across from the hotel's main entrance, because thick ivy covered a six-foot chain link fence running along the front of the property on both sides of the driveway.

She went down the hotel steps, along the curved driveway to the street, and crossed over. As she was crossing, someone inside the stable slid shut the door. She halted to one side of the driveway and parted the ivy enough to make herself a viewing hole. She fixed her gaze on the stable door.

After a few moments a smaller door in the big sliding door opened and the man Jill had identified as August Fitzgerald stepped out. He looked both ways, then gestured to those still inside. Kelly and the hotel detective came out. The man was to her left and gripped her left elbow with his right hand. His other hand hung at his side, and although Sabrina couldn't see it because his left side was away from her, she guessed from Kelly's stiff gait that he held some kind of weapon in it that he was threatening her with.

The trio crossed the barnyard to a long, low one-story building between the house and the barn. They all disappeared into it.

Sabrina glanced back toward the hotel just in time to see a Rolls Royce with Koslo at the wheel and Terranova next to him pulling off the parking lot into the street. Before either man could spot her, she ducked around the edge of the fence out of sight. Peering through the ivy, she saw the Rolls turn north. Moments later Jill followed. To Sabrina's surprise she was driving Sabrina's car instead of her own.

Turning, Sabrina hurried along the driveway, wish-

ing she had chosen something less visible to wear to the cocktail party than her flaming red dress. It was a long driveway, because the cluster of buildings around the barnyard was set back from the street a good seventy yards. Sabrina kept her eye on the windows of the two-story house as she went by it, hoping that if it had any occupants, none would glance out.

The building into which Kelly and her captors had disappeared had a number of windows along the front, all with venetian blinds drawn over them, but with the slats adjusted horizontally to let in light. Sabrina stopped at the first window she came to, near the corner of the building, and peered in.

It seemed to be a saddle-repair shop, because a number of damaged saddles were on wooden carpenter horses. No one was in sight. At the far end was a closed door. Sabrina assumed Kelly and her captors must be in there.

After glancing at the house one more time to make sure she wasn't under observation, Sabrina went to the door and quietly turned the knob. The door was unlocked. Opening it, she went in and left it standing open.

Taking her gun from her purse, she tiptoed over to the closed door at the far end of the room and put her ear to it. She could hear muffled voices, but the door was too thick to make out what was being said.

She considered throwing open the door and covering everyone in the room, but hesitated because she had no idea how many people were in there. Just in case she ended up a captive too, she decided she had better let John Bosley know where she was.

Glancing around, she spotted a table with a telephone on it in the center of the room. It was a good thirty feet from the door she was standing next to, which made it unlikely anyone the other side of the door would hear her using it.

She tiptoed to the table, watching over her shoulder and ready to spin and cover anyone who might emerge from the other room. A phone book lay next to the phone. Sabrina quickly riffled through it to find

the number of Moonshadows, and dialed it. As the other phone started to ring, she leveled her gun at the door at the far end of the room.

A feminine voice in her ear said, "Moonshadows."

Sabrina said in a low tone, "Please page Mr. John Bosley in the cocktail lounge and have him come to the phone."

"All right, madam," the switchboard operator said. "Hold on, please."

About three minutes ticked by, then Bosley's voice said. "Bosley here."

"Sabrina, Bosley," she said, still low-toned. "Thought I'd better phone you a situation report. Kelly was caught in Terranova's office by Terranova, a man named Koslo, and the hotel detective. She's being held across the street from there in the saddle-repair shop of the Fitzgerald Riding Stables. I'm there now, with my gun trained on the door of the room where they have her."

"Be careful," Bosley cautioned. "Jill with you?"

"No, she followed Terranova and Koslo. They took off somewhere in a Rolls Royce."

"You don't plan to break in there alone, do you?" Bosley asked.

"I had it in mind."

"Maybe you'd better back off. I'll call the police."

"They may have nasty plans for Kelly," Sabrina said. "And the police may not get here in time. Call them if you want to, but I'm moving in now. Why don't you drive over to pick us up after you call the police?"

"Right in the front way?"

"The back would be better. There's a two-story house next-door, and for all I know, it may be full of hoods. There's a bridle path that comes in from the rear right up to this building. How you get on to it from the other direction, I don't know, but you can figure that out."

"You're not supposed to drive a car on bridle paths," Bosley said.

When that brought nothing but silence, he had the

grace to say, "Excuse that comment. Give me ten minutes before you make your move, and I'll be in position."

Sabrina glanced at her watch and saw it was 6:10. "Okay, Bosley, we'll expect you at six twenty."

Hanging up, she tiptoed back to the door at the end of the room and put her ear to it again. She was just in time to hear a squeal of pain from Kelly.

Twenty-one

Jill heard the clank of some heavy chain being loaded into the back of the pickup truck. Then she heard the sliding door of the warehouse open, and the pickup's engine started. The vehicle backed, turned, and came to a halt again. She heard the door being slid closed. Someone clambered in back to sit next to her, his seat, she suspected, the tarp-wrapped corpse of Harvey Sunday. The truck began to move.

They didn't drive far. When the truck stopped, she heard Terranova's voice say, "We've got some cargo for you, Gunner."

She felt herself being lifted and carried aboard ship. When the carriers tipped her at a head-down angle for a short period, she realized she was being carried below. She was lowered to the floor, this time on her side.

Terranova's voice said, "Take them out about four miles. And make sure those chains are wired tight. We don't want any bodies washing ashore."

Jill felt goose bumps rise all over her.

A voice she hadn't heard before, but which she as-

sumed belonged to the bearded young skipper, said, "This is kind of risky stuff, Mr. Terranova."

"You'll get a bonus."

Apparently the skipper's objection had had nothing to do with the morality of the situation, because Jill heard no more from him.

Terranova said, "Okay, Jock, let's get rolling. I want to appear back at the party for a while before we go over across the street, just in case we need an alibi. In that mob, probably nobody noticed we were gone."

"It's after six," Koslo's voice said. "Wasn't the party supposed to break up at six?"

"You ever hear of a cocktail party ending when it was supposed to?" Terranova asked. "The place will still be jammed at seven."

There was the sound of several pairs of feet ascending the stairs, then silence. Jill strained her bonds to see if she could get her hands loose, but after a brief struggle, decided it was hopeless. She simply waited.

She heard the boat engines start, then felt the boat moving. At first it rolled only slightly. When the roll suddenly increased, she realized they had left the bay and were on the open sea.

Footsteps descended, she heard someone kneel next to her, and a slight relaxing of the tightness of her wrapping told her the rope tied around her tarp had been cut. There was the click of a knife being closed, then she was rolled over several times as the tarp was unwound.

She ended up on her stomach. Fingers untied the knot in the handkerchief around her head, then reached around to pluck the wadded handkerchief from her mouth. She was rolled over on her back to look up at Buck Schilling. His good eye was glittering at her strangely, and the other one was gazing past her.

Jill looked around. They were in a small cabin with narrow two-tiered bunks on each side. Aside from some wall lockers, there was nothing else in the room. The

space between the bunks was not quite enough to accommodate the unrolled tarp, which curled up about a foot on each side.

She looked back at the coveralled man. His left eye was now focused on her, with the same strange glitter in it, and his right eye gazed past her. She found the switch unnerving.

"You're sure a beautiful babe to waste as fishbait," he said huskily.

"Then why don't you cut me loose?" she asked with a touch of hope. She made her voice sexily invitational. "I'd be awfully grateful."

"You're gonna be grateful anyway," he assured her. "You're gonna have one last bit of fun before we toss you overboard."

To her horror, he sat on a bunk to remove his heavy work shoes, then stood to unzip and take off his coveralls. He was wearing long underwear, not very clean.

Kneeling before her, he pulled off her flat-heeled pumps and tossed them aside. The glitter was now in both eyes, and he kept focusing one, then the other on her face, giving the effect of a blinking signal lantern. His breathing had become hoarse.

He reached for her shorts and tried to pull them down, but they were too tight to slide over her hips. Apparently he hadn't noticed the zipper in back while she was lying on her face, because after futilely jerking on them for a few moments, he rose and went over to the bunk where he had dropped his coveralls to take his knife from a pocket. It was an ordinary jackknife. Pulling out a three-inch blade, he knelt in front of her again.

"You don't need that," Jill told him, somehow suppressing her terror enough to make herself sound as eager as he was. "There's a zipper in back. Just roll me on my side."

His breathing became even more hoarse, and his eyes began darting back and forth with dizzying rapidity. "Okay, baby," he said. "You want it, don't you? You'll like it. I guarantee you'll like it."

Dropping the knife, he rolled her over on her right side. Instantly Jill's bare left foot lashed out to catch him on the Adam's apple with the force of a swung baseball bat. He was driven backwards to land with a jolting thump on the drop seat of his long johns. Stunned, momentarily paralyzed, he sat there gasping for breath.

Jill bounced to her feet and swung her right foot in a dropkick, using his head for the ball. The side of her foot connected with his chin with such force that it lifted him several inches from his seated position before he collapsed on his back, out cold.

Jill glanced at the open knife lying on the floor, turned her back to it, crossed her ankles and gracefully sank to the lotus position. She felt behind her, located the knife, and cut the rope binding her wrists.

It took a few moments of rubbing to restore the circulation to her hands. Then she rose, felt in the right-hand pocket of the coveralls and drew out Buck Schilling's gun. It was a .38 automatic. She drew back the slide far enough to make sure a shell was seated in the chamber, reset the safety, and thrust it into the right hip pocket of her shorts.

She put her shoes back on before kneeling next to the unconscious man to check him. Apparently she hadn't smashed his windpipe, or at least not badly enough to cut off his breathing, because he was breathing and his heart was still beating. She was relieved that she hadn't killed him, but wasn't sorry to think he would be wearing a padded Thomas collar on his neck for a time.

Rolling him over on his stomach, she used the rope that had been tied around the tarpaulin to lash his hands behind him. Although the chance of his regaining consciousness before they got back to shore struck her as remote, it was a chance. So that he couldn't do the same thing she had in the event he did regain consciousness, she picked up the jackknife and tossed it out a porthole.

The ladder from the cabin came out topside only a

few feet behind the helmsman's wheel. As she reached the top of the steps, the bearded young skipper said over his shoulder, "About a mile out. It'll be a little while yet."

Stepping behind him, Jill placed the muzzle of the automatic against his right ear and said pleasantly, "No it won't, because we're turning back in."

The man stiffened and his knuckles whitened on the wheel.

In the same pleasant tone Jill said, "I really don't need you, because I know how to run a boat. So if you have any objections, I'll just blow your head off and take it in myself."

The wheel spun to port and the boat began to turn in a circle. Jill backed a couple of steps, but kept her gun leveled.

"What happened to Schilling?" the bearded man asked huskily.

"He decided to take a nap. Gunner's your name, isn't it?"

"Yes, ma'am," he said in a subdued voice. "You want to dock back at Seacliffe Bay or at the hotel?"

"Let's make it the hotel."

Gunner turned the wheel slightly to starboard, and set a course for the hotel.

Jill glanced around for Harvey Sunday, and saw the other rolled tarp against the stern rail. Returning her attention to the skipper, she studied his husky frame, then moved around to his right side to get a view of his profile. He wasn't a bad looking man, she decided. He looked as though he might be a college student on vacation.

"How does a clean-cut All-American boy like you get involved in murder?" she inquired.

In a depressed voice he said, "The pay's good."

Jill looked ahead, trying to estimate how long it would take them to get in. "How fast will this thing go?" she asked.

"Thirty knots."

Jill, who knew something of navigation, but still tended to think in landlubber terms, mentally calculated that thirty knots was about 34.5 miles an hour. "What are we doing?" she asked.

"About twenty knots."

"Open it up," she ordered.

The boat picked up speed, but also began to pitch a little more. Jill began to feel a little queasy. But at that speed they were in close enough for the speed to be cut before she actually got seasick.

Gunner gradually throttled down as they neared shore, then, a moment before they reached the floating dock, threw the engines into reverse so that they came to a complete stop just as the side of the boat bumped against the old automobile tires fastened to the side of the dock as bumpers. Cutting the engines, he jumped out on the dock to tie up.

Still keeping him covered, Jill jumped down on the dock too. No one else was nearby, because the dock was used solely by the charter boat. A couple of hotel guests were sunning themselves on the beach in the late afternoon sun, but they were a good hundred feet away and were lying on a blanket with their eyes closed.

Completing his tying up, the bearded man looked at Jill and asked, "What now?"

"You present me with a problem," she said. "I can't leave you running around loose, because you'll head straight for Terranova. But I haven't time to turn you in to the police."

"Let me go and I'll take off out of town," he said hopefully. "Why should I run to Terranova? All that would get me now is accessory to murder."

"You're a smart lad," Jill said. "You own a car?"

He nodded. "On the hotel parking lot."

"And a room at the hotel?"

He shook his head. "I live on the boat. Part of my deal for skippering."

"Okay," she decided. "I'm going to give you a break.

You can have five minutes to pack, then I'll see you to your car." She gestured with the gun for him to get back on the boat.

Down below she continued to hold the gun on him as he threw a few things from a locker into a duffel bag. Buck Schilling slept peacefully through the whole thing. If Gunner had any curiosity as to how Jill had overpowered the man with her hands tied behind her and wrapped in a tarp, he didn't exhibit it.

When he was packed, Jill herded him up the wooden stairs from the beach to the hotel grounds, and on to the parking lot. The people on the blanket never looked up, and no one at the moment was driving on or off the parking lot.

He threw the duffel bag into the back seat of a 1962 Chevrolet sedan and climbed under the wheel. Jill decided it was now safe to pocket her gun.

Looking at her through the open side window, he said, "Thanks."

"A matter of convenience," she said. "And you're not out of the woods. I'm going to have to report your part in this eventually, of course, so you'd better head far and fast."

"I will," he assured her. "Thanks again."

"You're welcome. In the future try to be a better person."

He gave her an odd look, started the car and drove off. She watched until the Chevrolet exited from the parking lot and turned right. Then she headed for the side door of the hotel.

Twenty-two

It was a little ridiculous to start on a rescue mission wearing a tuxedo, Bosley thought, particularly with brown shoes on your feet. But there was no time to change. As soon as Sabrina hung up, he hurried out to his Plymouth.

It was a company car, and therefore had a mobile phone. Bosley used it to call the local sheriff's substation. The call was answered by someone who identified himself as Deputy Flynn.

"This is John Bosley," Bosley said. "I'm a representative of Townsend Investigations of Los Angeles, in Seacliffe to investigate an alleged murder. At the moment I'm at the Moonshadows Hotel. One of my colleagues has been kidnapped by the suspected killers, and is being held at the Fitzgerald Riding Stables across the street."

Flynn said in a startled voice, "The Fitzgerald Riding Stables? Is Fitzgerald involved?"

"I'm afraid so, plus a man named Harry West, and possibly others. A second colleague is moving in to rescue the kidnapped one in a few minutes, and I'm going in the back way to pick them both up. I'm reporting this to you in case anything goes wrong."

"You'd better hold up, Mr. Bosley," the deputy said. "My assistant and I will be there right away. This is a matter for police action."

"Come along by all means," Bosley urged. "But there's no time to wait for you to get here. I'm moving now."

He hung up, started the car and drove to the park-

ing lot exit. Bringing the car to a halt there, he studied the riding stable across the street, trying to decide which way to go in order to approach it from the rear. To the left seemed more likely to him, because that way led to open country, and it seemed more likely the bridle path would go in that direction than into the village.

He turned right at the first intersection and drove toward the cliff that loomed over the village a couple of hundred yards away, along the edge of which ran the Pacific Coast Highway. About halfway there he was pleased to spot a roadside sign reading Horse Crossing 200 feet. Drive Carefully.

He slowed the car, and finally brought it to a halt just short of a narrow, tree-lined lane of cinders that came from the right and continued on the opposite side of the road. Signs on each side read Bridal Path, Vehicles Prohibited.

Taking a deep breath, Bosley turned right onto the lane.

The bridle path meandered among the trees for about 150 yards before ending between a large barn and a long low building that Bosley assumed was the saddle-repair shop Sabrina had phoned from. They were part of a cluster of buildings that abruptly came in sight as he slowly came around a curve twenty-five yards behind the barn. He instantly braked, then backed around the curve again, out of the view of anyone who might look that way from the cluster of buildings.

He backed a few more yards, then drove off the bridle path to nose between two trees. He backed out facing in the opposite direction, then continued to back until he reached a point just before the curve. Leaving the engine running, he got out and took up a position behind a tree where he could get a good view of the cluster of buildings.

There was no sign of activity.

Kelly's squeal of pain changed Sabrina's mind about waiting ten minutes. Throwing open the door, she stepped inside with her gun leveled.

Five people were in the room. A husky gray-haired man in his fifties, lying on a cot against the wall, was just beginning to sit up. Kelly lay on her back on a table in the center of the room, wearing nothing but a bra on the upper part of her body. The statuesque Inga was leaning over her. Fitzgerald and West were standing on the other side of the table, watching the masseuse work on Kelly.

Harry West's left hand darted inside his jacket. But he froze when Sabrina cocked her gun and said, "Don't do that, unless you want to be fitted for a truss."

Carefully he brought out his hand, empty, and raised both hands to shoulder height. Fitzgerald raised his also. Inga, who had turned to face Sabrina, merely glared at her.

Kelly sat up on the table, a trifle painfully.

"You okay?" Sabrina asked.

Kelly worked her arms and legs. "No problem, I guess, except for some bruises from a massage."

Sliding off the table, she circled behind Harry West, reached under his right arm and drew out a .38 automatic. Sticking it in the belt of her slacks, she patted the hotel detective for other weapons, found none, then shook down the stable proprietor. Fitzgerald wasn't armed.

Kelly went over to lift her jacket from the nail where it hung and put it on. Then she went over to Inga, reached out and squeezed the pressure point behind the big blonde's left ear.

Letting out a yell of pain, Inga took a roundhouse swing at Kelly. Easily ducking beneath it, Kelly grabbed the blonde's wrist, spun her back to her and flipped the bigger woman over her back to land on her buttocks with a crash that swooshed the air out of her.

As Inga stared up at her with a stupefied expression on her face, Kelly said airily, "Sorry I don't have time for the full massage. Maybe next time."

The man on the bed said a little whoozily, "I don't

pocket would attract attention. And she couldn't imagine why she would need a gun in the hotel. There was a trash barrel with a swinging lid just outside the side door. She pushed the lid open, saw that it was nearly full, and laid the gun on top of the trash.

The cocktail party had condensed enough to be contained in the cocktail lounge by that time. There were a few people in the lobby, but none of them had glasses in their hands. Through the archway into the cocktail lounge Jill could see a fairly sizable crowd still in there, though.

The peculiar looks she got as she crossed the lobby toward the lounge caused her to pause before a full-length mirror. To her horror, her hair was disheveled, there was a smudge of dirt on her nose, and various other smudges on her knees, arms and bare stomach. The tarpaulin she had been rolled in apparently hadn't been very clean.

The bearded Gunner could have been kind enough to tell her what a mess she looked, she thought, after the favor she had done him. She considered going to her room to clean up, but the situation was too urgent. Bracing herself, she continued on to the cocktail lounge in search of Bosley.

She paused in the archway to look over the crowd. It had now thinned enough for her to be able to see everyone in the room. She didn't spot Bosley, but she did see Paul Terranova over at the bar, establishing his alibi by talking to his wife and Dale Parker.

She decided to check Bosley's room, and if he wasn't there, to go over to the stables in an attempt to find Sabrina. She turned around, to be confronted by Jock Koslo and Dr. Dignam, who had halted only two feet behind her.

A gun jumped into Koslo's hand and pressed into her bare stomach. His body barred the view of the gun from the lobby, her's barred it from the view of those in the cocktail lounge.

"Just freeze," he said. "Doc, go get Terranova. On the double!"

Looking terribly upset, Dignam hurried toward the bar. Koslo moved closer to Jill.

"Now we're just going to look like we're in intimate conversation," he said. "Incidentally, you look like hell."

"Thanks," she said. "You're such a gentleman."

Terranova came striding over to the bar with Dignam trailing after him. The two men moved in on each side in order to block even more effectively the view of Koslo's gun.

"How'd you get away?" Terranova asked through his teeth. "Where are Gunner and Schilling?"

"I don't have to answer your questions," Jill told him.

"Yes, you do," he said, his eyes blazing with fury. He turned to Koslo. "We'll take her across the street to let Inga work on her."

Jill looked into Koslo's eyes, trying to judge the man, and decided he wasn't rash enough to commit cold-blooded murder in front of dozens of witnesses. "I don't think so, thanks," she said, suddenly backing a step, then another.

Koslo abruptly shoved his gun into the side pocket of his jacket, but kept it aimed at her through the cloth.

"You move another inch and I'll drill a hole in that pretty little belly button," he said gutturally.

"No, you won't," she said with more courage than she felt. "Because if you do in front of all these witnesses, the state will make you just as dead as I am."

Turning her back, she headed across the lounge for the door leading outside. After a moment of frustrated staring after her, Koslo and Terranova strode in her wake. Dignam reluctantly followed.

Jill reached the door, ducked through it and headed toward the parking lot at a dead run.

There was no one at all outdoors at the rear of the hotel at the moment. Koslo seemed to regard that as lowering the risk of observation enough to throw a shot her way as she reached the corner of the build-

ing. Brick dust stung her left cheek as the slug gouged a rut in the rear wall. Then she was around the corner and racing for the side door.

She reached the trash barrel, shoved aside the swinging lid and grabbed up the .38 automatic. She flicked off the safety as she spun, dropped to one knee and leveled the gun at arm's length, steadying her wrist with her left hand.

The three men had rounded the corner, but had paused to glance about the parking lot to make sure there were no witnesses. There weren't any, but the delay gave Jill the opportunity to fire first.

Her slug also sprayed brick dust, this time in Koslo's face. The three men scattered, Dignam ducking back around the corner, Koslo and Terranova diving behind parked cars. Jill jumped to her feet and ran for the front of the hotel.

She heard Terranova yell, "Jock, get the Rolls while I follow on foot!"

Twenty-three

Jill dashed along the curved driveway in front of the hotel toward the street. A car was unloading an elderly couple at the front door, and the arriving guests, the doorman and the bellman who was removing luggage from the car's trunk all looked after her in mild surprise. Because of all those witnesses, Terranova not only made no attempt to fire, but didn't even draw his gun. He continued to race after Jill, though, to the further bemusement of the four witnesses.

Apparently none of them noticed the gun in Jill's

hand, and none seemed to associate the two shots they couldn't have avoided hearing with the chase. That was about standard.

The elderly man said to the doorman, "Domestic squabble, do you suppose?"

"No, that's the hotel director chasing her," the doorman said. "Probably a thief he caught ransacking a room."

Jill made a headlong dash across the street. When he saw her run into the driveway of the stables, Terranova paused at the curb in pleased surprise. That simplified matters, he thought, because that was where he planned to take the girl anyway.

Jill momentarily halted to look back just in time to see the Rolls Royce brake to a stop at the exit from the parking lot. Koslo was driving, and she could see Dignam in the back seat. Terranova ran over to jump in next to Koslo. The car started across the street, but was momentarily halted by a sudden flow of traffic. Jill resumed running.

Sabrina emerged from a long, low building on the right side of the barnyard at which the driveway ended, beyond a two-story house Jill was just passing. Behind her came Kelly, supporting a burly gray-haired man in his fifties whom Jill guessed was George Anderson.

"Terranova, Koslo and Dignam are coming!" Jill called breathlessly while she was still fifty feet away.

"Armed?" Sabrina asked as Jill came to a panting halt. She examined the disheveled state of the usually fastidious blonde girl in astonishment. "What happened to you?"

"Never mind that now. Koslo and Terranova are. Let's get out of here."

"I told Bosley to meet us with a car behind the barn," Sabrina said, peering that way.

Bosley, still in his tuxedo, stepped from behind a tree about twenty-five yards beyond the barn and waved. Sabrina waved back, then glanced the other way just as the Rolls Royce nosed into the driveway.

"Oh-oh!" she said. "We'll never make it to Bosley with Mr. Anderson before they get here."

"The horses!" Kelly cried, urging Anderson toward the stable nearest the barn.

Immediately grasping what she meant, Sabrina grabbed Anderson's other arm to speed him up. "You take the other stable," she said to Jill. "Stampede the horses!"

The Rolls came to a halt in front of the two-story house, and Koslo and Terranova spilled out of either side with guns in their hands. Dignam discreetly remained in the back seat of the car.

By then Jill had rolled open the sliding door of the nearer stable and had darted inside. Slowed by having to support the blind man, Kelly and Sabrina had just reached the door of the other stable.

As Koslo and Terranova rushed toward them, a series of gunshots sounded from within the first stable. The two men scrambled out of the way as a dozen terrified horses stampeded through the open stable door toward them. Jill raced out of the stable behind the horses and headed for the space between the second stable and the barn.

Meantime the second stable door had been slid open and Sabrina and Kelly had pushed Anderson to one side of the door. The first group of charging horses had gone by and were racing toward the street, and Koslo and Terranova were again advancing, when more shots sounded from within the second stable. The two men again dived for safety as another dozen horses stampeded toward them.

Under cover of the second stampede Kelly and Sabrina hustled the blind man from the stable and around behind the barn after Jill.

Bosley had backed the Plymouth nearly to the end of the bridle path. Jill had pulled open the left rear door, then had run around the front to jump in next to Bosley. Sabrina climbed in back and moved over to the far right. Kelly pushed Anderson into the middle of the back seat, jumped in next to him and

slammed the door. Bosley took off with spinning wheels.

Behind them there were two shots. They heard a bullet thunk into the rear of the car, and another zing from the roof. Then they were around the curve, out of sight of the shooters.

"Charlie isn't going to like this," Bosley said.

"Like what?" Jill asked.

"He was just getting ready to trade this car in. Do you know what bullet holes do to the Blue Book price?"

In an exasperated voice Sabrina said, "Bosley, you're impossible!"

"We almost got killed, and you're worrying about the Blue Book!" Kelly chimed in.

Glancing sideways at Jill, Bosley changed the subject by asking, "What happened to you?"

"Koslo and another man wrapped me in a piece of dirty tarp, with the intention of dumping me in the ocean. How I got out of it is too long a story to tell now. Incidentally, Bosley, the man I knew as Harvey Sunday, but you said is a Senate investigator, is dead. Murdered."

"I'm sorry to hear that," Bosley said. "He was a nice fellow."

"Poor Horny Harvey," Kelly said with sympathy. "How was he killed, Jill?"

Before Jill could answer, a distraction occurred. They were nearing the spot where the bridle path emerged onto a street. Just before they got there, a sheriff's car pulled in. Both cars braked to halt a dozen feet apart. Two uniformed deputies got out with drawn guns.

"The Marines always arrive a little late," Bosley said. "I phoned them a good twenty minutes ago."

"You phoned the local sub-station!" Sabrina said in disbelief. "Bosley, Deputy Flynn is in with Terranova. I told Charlie that over the phone."

"You did?" Bosley said, his expression turning uneasy as the two officers approached from either side. "Charlie didn't tell me."

Halting near the front windows, the deputies covered the group in the car with their guns. Deputy Flynn's face showed recognition when his gaze touched Sabrina, mixed with surprise at her being here. He glanced at the other occupants of the back seat, then at Jill, whose smudged and disheveled appearance also seemed to surprise him, and finally turned his attention to Bosley.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"John Bosley, officer. I phoned you earlier."

The deputy sheriff lowered his gun, then put it away. "It's okay, Ed," he said to the other deputy.

The other man holstered his gun too. Sabrina looked at Deputy Flynn in surprise.

"I thought you were a close friend of Terranova's," she said.

"I'm not a close friend of anybody who crosses the line, counsellor," he said grimly. "And murder and kidnapping are across the line. What's the situation in there?"

Sabrina said, "Last we saw of Jock Koslo and Terranova, they were shooting at us. If you look, you'll see a couple of bullet holes in the car. Dr. Dignam was sitting in the back of Terranova's Rolls Royce. We left August Fitzgerald, Harry West and Inga Svensen locked in a storeroom off the saddle-repair shop, but I imagine Terranova and Koslo have released them by now."

Jill said, "For starters, you'll find the body of a Senate investigator who's been living at the hotel under the name of Harvey Sunday rolled in a piece of tarp on the deck of Moonshadows' charter boat, which at the moment is docked behind the hotel. Down below you'll find his killer tied up. His name is Buck Schilling, and he's a flunky of Terranova's."

Flynn's expression indicated he knew the man.

Kelly said, "For seconds, we think Terranova either killed Brooke Anderson or had her killed. For thirds, he had Mr. Anderson here kidnapped, and Inga's been torturing him in an attempt to make him tell where Brooke's manuscript is."

Flynn looked at the blind man. "You're the father of the girl that drowned?"

"Yes," Anderson said simply.

Kelly said, "For fourths, I also was kidnapped and was turned over to Inga for some massaging. Want fifths?"

"I think you've given me enough for the moment," Flynn said with a strange mixture of grimness and regret. "Ed, get on the radio to Riser and tell the sheriff to get reinforcements over here fast. Then back out so these people can get past."

Nodding, the other deputy went back to climb into the sheriff's car. They could see him using the radio microphone, then he backed the car to the street.

Flynn said, "You'll all have to stay available as witnesses of course, until the DA gives you permission to leave the county."

"Three of us are at Moonshadows," Bosley told him. "Miss Duncan is at a local motel, and I can temporarily put Mr. Anderson up in my room. We'll stick around, gladly."

He drove on to the street and turned left. Behind them the sheriff's car turned back into the bridle path.

Kelly said, "I'm glad he didn't ask for fifths."

"Why?" Sabrina asked.

"That was that we have documentary evidence about the Seacliffe Isles Marina Complex fraud being perpetrated by the holding company called the Matrix Development Corporation."

"We do?" Bosley asked. "That's news to me."

"It's all on film in my camera," Kelly informed him. "And the camera's in the bottom drawer of Terranova's office desk, along with my purse. The reason I was reluctant to mention that to Deputy Flynn is that the president of Matrix is Terranova, Dignam and Fitzgerald are vice-presidents, and Elizabeth Terranova is secretary."

"So?" Bosley asked.

"Deputy Sheriff Al Flynn is the treasurer."

There was general silence as everyone absorbed

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this. Then Sabrina said, "No wonder I got so little cooperation out of him. But apparently he *does* draw the line. I guess Terranova went too far for Flynn's taste."

They reached the main street and Bosley turned in the direction of the hotel.

Jill said, "Bosley, run me down to the village shopping center before we return to the hotel. I need some shampoo, some hair spray, some cleansing cream, and some laundry soap to get the dirt stains out of these shorts."

Bosley gave her a look of exasperation. "Jill, we're not going to take time out to go shopping at the tail end of a case. We're going to get that camera out of Terranova's desk before we do anything else. He may be over there now, trying to destroy the film."

"Maybe that's what *you're* going to do," Jill told him. "But I'm going to have a shower and shampoo. Either of you girls have some shampoo and hair spray with you?"

"I have," Sabrina said. "But it's at the motel."

"There's some in my room," Kelly said. "But my room key is in my purse in Terranova's desk. So I guess you'll have to wait, Jill."

"All right," Jill said with a resigned sigh. "But I wish you would all cluster around me when we cross the hotel lobby. I'm tired of people looking at me as though I was Moonbeam Macswine."

Twenty-four

As they drove past the front of the Fitzgerald Riding Stables, just before turning onto the hotel parking lot, Bosley and the three girls all looked up the driveway. The Rolls Royce was still parked at its end.

"Must be having a council of war," Bosley said.

"More likely a council of desperation," Kelly said. "They're through, and they know it. Probably they're just quietly waiting for the police to arrive."

Looking through the rear window, Sabrina said, "They've arrived. A sheriff's car just pulled into the driveway."

The other two girls turned to look, but by then the ivied fence had cut off the view.

Kelly said, "Must have been cruising in the area, because they couldn't have gotten here from Riser that fast. Unless it was Flynn and his partner, deciding to go in from the front instead of by the bridle path."

"No," Sabrina said. "They were different deputies."

As they all got out of the car on the parking lot, Sabrina glanced around, failed to spot her car and said to Jill, "You didn't crack up my car even worse than it was, did you?"

"No, I just left it parked in front of the warehouse at Seacliffe Bay where they took me prisoner. Warehouse One, Berth Twenty-three."

Kelly said, "I'll drive you over to get it after a while, Sabrina. Jill probably won't be out of the shower for hours."

"One, anyway," Jill said. Drawing the .38 automatic from the hip pocket of her shorts, she handed it to Bosley. "I took this from the man who killed Harvey

Sunday. Mine's in my purse in Sabrina's car. You better carry this, because the butt sticks out of my hip pocket."

Bosley dropped it into a side pocket of his tuxedo.

Lifting the skirt of her jacket, Kelly drew a similar gun from under her belt and handed it to Bosley also. "I took this from West. It makes a bulge."

Dropping it into his other side pocket, Bosley looked down at himself. "They make bulges on me too," he complained. "I look like I've got deformed hips."

They went into the hotel by the side door, Kelly and Sabrina leading George Anderson, Jill using the three of them as a screen by walking behind them, and Bosley going ahead to open the door.

As they crossed the lobby to Terranova's office door, Kelly said to Sabrina, "My picklock's in my purse, in Terranova's desk. Hope you have one."

Sabrina produced a picklock set and handed it to her. They halted in a group before the office door, Kelly inserted the two parts of the picklock into the lock, fiddled for about five seconds, and opened the door.

"Hey, what's going on there?" a startled voice called from the registration desk.

They looked that way to see the night registration clerk, a thin young man with horn-rimmed glasses, staring at them.

"You explain it, Bosley," Kelly said, disappearing into the office.

Approaching the desk with a cheerful smile on his face, Bosley said, "Miss Garrett left her purse in Mr. Terranova's office. He loaned her his key to get it."

"That didn't look like a key," the clerk said suspiciously.

"It opened the door, didn't it?" Bosley asked with logic.

Kelly came out carrying her purse. Since she hadn't had one when she went in, the clerk's suspicion disappeared despite the strange look of the key she had

used on the door. Then he looked at Jill, and a startled expression appeared on his face.

"She's been out playing," Bosley explained. "The child simply gets into everything."

They crossed the lobby to the elevators, this time Jill walking with Bosley ahead of the others, in order to screen herself from the desk. They all got on a car, and Bosley pushed the fourth-floor button.

Punching number three also, Kelly said, "Jill and I will stop by my room long enough for me to give her what she needs, then I'll be up to yours, Bosley." She took some folded sheets from her purse and handed them to Bosley. "I picked these up while getting my purse and camera. That's Brooke Anderson's second letter to her father, plus a translation from the braille that Terranova had done."

Jill went back down to her own room to clean up as soon as she had gotten the shampoo and hair spray from Kelly. When Kelly got up to Bosley's room, she found George Anderson seated in a chair by the window, reading the braille letter with his fingers, Bosley and Sabrina seated side by side on the bed reading the typed translation. Kelly took a seat on the straight-backed chair in front of the writing desk.

Bosley finished reading the typed sheets, glanced inquiringly at Sabrina, and got a nod indicating that she had also finished. Folding the sheets, he rose from the bed and went over to lay them on the dresser.

Turning to Anderson, he asked, "Where did your daughter hide her money in college, Mr. Anderson?"

"In a secret compartment under the back seat of her car. There was some theft going on in the dormitory. She had a boyfriend in the engineering school who was something of an inventor. He fixed the back seat so that when you pressed a hidden catch, it lifted like the lid of a trunk. It was a pretty safe hiding place, because he constructed it so that if you didn't press the catch, you couldn't open it with a crowbar."

"Did she still have the same car?" Bosley asked.

"Oh, yes. She's only been out of school a few years.

A 1968 Volkswagen. It was found parked near the beach where she drowned. The sheriff's department impounded it, and is holding it until I can get someone to pick it up."

"You know where that secret catch is?" Sabrina asked.

"Yes, I could find it."

Bosley asked, "Is it being held at the local substation, or at the sheriff's headquarters office at the county seat?"

"Here in Seacliffe."

"Suppose we take a ride over there, Mr. Anderson," Bosley suggested. He turned to Kelly. "While Mr. Anderson and I are doing that, you could take Sabrina to pick up her car, Kelly."

"All right," Kelly agreed, getting up. "Ready, Sabrina?"

Bosley said, "I think I'll take time to get out of this tuxedo, if you don't mind, Mr. Anderson. And unload all this extra hardware."

He took the two automatics from his pockets to lay on his dresser. Then he contemplated them with pursed lips and a thoughtful expression on his face.

"On the other hand, they should be turned in to the sheriff's sub-station I suppose. Guess I can't just leave them here."

Sabrina, moving toward the door with Kelly, said, "One thing about arguing with yourself, Bosley, is that no matter how it comes out, you're bound to win."

John Bosley and the three angels were in the agency office, making their final report to Charlie Townsend. As usual Charlie was not physically present. Their voices went to him by microphone, his came to them from the squawk box on the desk.

Jill was saying, "Harold Stephens, alias Harvey Sunday, was Brooke Anderson's informant, Charlie. We think Harvey was the mysterious burglar we surprised in the Moonshadows personnel office."

Bosley said, "Actually, they were trading information. Brooke for her exposé, and Stephens for his Senate investigation."

Sabrina said, "Terranova had bribed Dignam, the county planning commissioner, by making him an officer in the dummy corporation that would profit from the fraud. Dignam arranged for an illegal purchase of the bay bottom and the access land to appear legal."

"A steamroller operation, Charlie," Kelly explained. "Matrix Development Corporation planned to unload the property it had illegally acquired on the developers of the Seacliffe Bay Isles Marina Complex at an enormous profit, and use that to build the Marina Hotel on land also illegally acquired which they planned to retain. Terranova would have managed the hotel at a handsome salary, in addition to receiving millions in corporate income from it as a major stockholder."

Bosley said, "When Terranova found Brooke out, he had his Swedish amazon, Inga Svensen, do his dirty work. Then Stephens had to be killed too, when they caught him in the warehouse, because he had seen all the dredging equipment there."

Kelly said, "They had the same plans for Jill, when they caught her there, but she foiled that."

"And very cleverly too, Bosley tells me," the voice from the speaker said. "Well, George Anderson sends his sincere thanks to you, angels. Well done. You too, Bosley."

Beaming, Bosley said, "Thank you, sir."

"Right now, I'd better get back to the case at hand."

The three angels exchanged knowing looks. Grinning, Jill asked, "What kind of case is it this time, Charlie? Brunette, redhead or blonde?"

"That's privileged information, angel," he said indulgently. "But I can tell you that I'm having to fish deep on this one, and I'm not certain the culprits I'm after are going to go for the bait I've cast. Bless you, angels. I'll be in touch."

The three girls were sure that his parting words held some kind of double meaning that would have let them know just what he was *really* doing, if they

could have deciphered the code. They were also sure that what he was really doing involved one or more beautiful girls.

They would have been astonished if they could actually have seen him. Charlie and George Anderson were seated together on the stern of Charlie's boat, with fishing lines in the water. To Charlie's right was the radio phone he had just hung up. Between the two men was a cooler full of beer. There wasn't a beautiful girl, or even an ugly one, in sight.

The sun was just beginning to slide down behind the horizon. Anderson said, "This is the best time of day, Charlie. Sunset. Brooke used to love it. She used to say sunset could've only been fashioned by God's hand." After a pause, he asked, "What's it look like? Right now, I mean?"

"Like you remember it, George. A shimmering tangerine ball, sliding down into a tranquil sea of blue and green. Like the world's at peace." There was a long silence, before Charlie asked, "Another beer, George?"

"Sounds good, Charlie," the blind man said. "Sounds real good. Make it an extra cold one. Then I'm going to fry you the damnedest fish dinner you've ever had in your life."

Charlie took two cans of beer from the cooler, popped the tops, and handed one to George Anderson.

HELL'S BELLES RING CRIME'S CHIMES!

Wise Charlie doesn't like his pleasures disturbed—unless it's by a puzzler worthy of his problem-solving pretties, Jill, Kelly and Sabrina.

So when a routine drowning starts smelling fishy, the angels head out—undercover and underdressed—for Moonshadows, a luxurious sandbox for the rich, where they start digging into the secrets of an ex-thug with a federally financed new identity, a Senate investigator with tennis elbow and bedroom eyes, a doctor with a nervous condition, and a meatpounding masseuse with a talent for mayhem, and they're all out for trouble...

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JACLYN SMITH
and
DAVID DOYLE
Created by IVAN GOFF and BEN ROBERTS
Based on the teleplay
"THE KILLING KIND"
By RICK HUSKY

65p

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Cover printed in USA